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# A R R A H N E I L ;

OR,

## T I M E S O F O L D .

B Y G . P . R . J A M E S , E S Q .

AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," "DARNLEY," "THE SMUGGLER,"

ETC. ETC.

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S .

V O L . I I I .

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## ARRAH NEIL ; OR, TIMES OF OLD.



### CHAPTER I.

LEAVING poor Diggory Falgate to find his way out of the vault as best he might, or, if he rather chose to stay there, to make what discoveries he could, we must return, by the reader's good leave, to some of the more important personages of our tale ; premising, however, that, although we have dwelt thus long upon the adventures of the worthy sign-painter, those adventures were by no means without their influence upon the fate of the other personages in their history. We must also pass over a period of several days since last we were at Langley Hall, allowing the

reader's imagination to supply the few and quiet changes which time had brought about ; no event of any consequence having taken place in the interim.

It was a warm and glowing evening, though autumn had spread his brown mantle over the trees, and while fair Arrah Neil and Lady Margaret Langley sat in the old lady's usual drawing-room, with the windows open as in midsummer, Annie Walton was seated under a little clump of beeches at the back of Langley Hall, with the Earl of Beverley, somewhat recovered from his wound, stretched on the dry grass at her feet.

They were happy enough to enjoy long pauses in conversation ; for their mutual love, as the reader has been already given to understand, was known and acknowledged by each ; and their minds, starting from one common point, would run on in meditation along paths, separate indeed, but not far distant, and then, like children playing in a meadow, would

return to show each other what flowers they had gathered.

“How calm and sweet the evening is,” said the earl, after one of these breaks. “One would hardly fancy the year so far advanced. I love these summer days in autumn, dearest. They often make me look on to after years, and think of the tempered joys and tranquil pleasures of old age, calling up the grand calm picture of latter life left us by a great Roman orator, when the too vivid sun of youth and manhood has somewhat sunk in the sky ; and we have freshness as well as warmth, though not the fervid heat of midsummer.”

“I love them too,” answered Miss Walton ; “and I think that in every season of the year there are days and hours of great beauty and grandeur. Though I like the early summer best, yet I can admire the clear winter sky, and the dazzling expanse of white that robes the whole earth in ermine, and even the autumnal storm with its fierce blast, loaded with sleet, and hail, and withered leaves. But

I was thinking, Francis, of how peaceful all things seem around, and what a horrible and sinful thing it is for men to deform the beautiful earth, and disturb the quiet of all God's creation with wild wars and senseless contests."

"A woman's thought, dear Annie," replied the earl; "and doubtless it *is* sinful; but alas! the sin is shared amongst so many, that it would in any war be difficult to portion it out. 'Tis not alone to be divided amongst those who fight, or amongst those who lead; it is not to be laid at the door of those who first take arms, or those who follow; it is not to be charged to the apparent aggressor; but every one who, by folly, weakness, passion, prejudice, or hatred, lays the foundation for strife in after years has a share in the crime. Oh! how many are the causes of war! Deeds often remote by centuries have their part; and always many an act done long before rises up—like an acorn buried in the ground, and springing into a tree—and is the seed from



which after contentions spring. Even in this very contest in which we are now engaged, though we may see and say who is now right and who wrong, yet what man can separate the complex threads of the tangled skein of the past, and tell who most contributed to bring about that state which all wise men must regret. Years, long years before this, the foundation was laid in the tyranny of Henry—in the proud sway of Elizabeth—in the weak despotism of James—in the persecution of the papists of one reign—in that of the puritans in another—in lavish expenditure—in vicious indulgence—in favouritism and minions—in the craving ambition of some subjects—in the discontented spirit of others—in the interested selfishness, the offended vanity, the mortified pride of thousands—in weak yieldings to unjust demands—in stubborn resistance of just claims—in fond adherence to ancient forms—in an insatiate love of novelty and change: and all this spread through generations, dear Annie, all of which

have their part in the result and the responsibility."

"Too wide a range, Francis, for my weak mind to take in," replied the lady; "but I do know, it is sad to see a land that once seemed happy, overspread with rapine and wrong, and deluged in blood."

"To hear no more the church-bells ringing gaily," said the earl with a smile, "or to see the market and the fair deserted. They may indeed seem trivial things; but yet they are amongst those that bring home to our hearts most closely the disruption of all those ties that bind man together in social union."

"But there are in the homes of every one more terrible proofs than that of the great evil," answered Miss Walton. "Never to see a friend, a brother, a father, quit our side, without the long train of fearful inquiries, When shall I see him again? Will it be for ever? How shall we meet, and where? Oh, Francis, how many a heart feels this like mine throughout the land! Danger, accident, and

death, at other times dim distant forms that we hardly see, are now become familiar thoughts, the companion of every fireside ; and calm security and smiling hope are banished afar, as if never to return."

"Oh ! they will come back, dear Annie," replied the earl. "This is a world of change. The April day of man's fluctuating passions has never cloud or sunshine long. No sooner does the calm light of peace overspread the sky, than storms are seen gathering on the horizon ; and no sooner does war and tumult imitate the tempest in destruction and ruin, than a glimpse of the blue heaven gleams through the shadow, and gives promise of brighter moments at another hour."

"But that hour is often a lifetime," answered the lady. "We are but at the beginning. Shall we ever see the close?"

"Who can say?" rejoined Lord Beverley ; "but one thing is certain, Annie. We are under God's will, my beloved. He can lengthen or shorten the time of trial at his pleasure ;

we ourselves, and all the men with whom or against whom we may act, are but his instruments. We can no more stride beyond the barrier he has fixed, than the sea can pass the boundary of sands with which he has surrounded it. Our task is to do that which we conscientiously believe it is our duty to him to do in the circumstances wherein he has placed us ; and we may be sure that, however much we may be mistaken, if such is our object and purpose, the errors of understanding will never be visited on our head as crimes by him who knows the capabilities of every creature that he has made, and can judge between intention and execution. God punishes sins and not mistakes, dear girl ; he tries the heart as well as the actions, and holds the balance even between each ; and though we may suffer in this world for the errors of others or for our own, there is exhaustless compensation in the hand of the Almighty for those who seek to do his will, and those who wilfully disobey it."

“I have learned a lesson on that score from the dear girl within there,” replied Miss Walton; and as she spoke she naturally turned her eyes to the room where she knew Arrah Neil was sitting. “What can be the matter?” she continued instantly, “see! Arrah is making eager signs to us to come in.”

The earl rose slowly and with difficulty; and before he had advanced more than a step or two with Annie Walton, who hastened anxiously to return to the house, Arrah Neil, with her sunny brown hair floating wildly about her face, came out running to meet them.

“Quick, quick, my lord, for pity’s sake!” she cried, “there is a large body of men before the drawbridge. The people are holding them in parley—the Lady Margaret says she can conceal you from all eyes, if you make haste.” She spoke with breathless eagerness; and Lord Beverley hurried his pace as much as possible, but with perfect calmness, turning with a smile to Annie Walton, and saying,—

“Fresh evils of civil war, Annie ; but I fear not the result.”

The time occupied in crossing to the house seemed fearfully long to Miss Walton and Arrah Neil ; but they found Lady Margaret waiting tranquilly enough at the small door that led into the meadow, and the old lady's only words were,—

“Follow,” to the earl ; and, “Wait in the withdrawing room—they will not let them in till I order it,” to her two fair guests. Then leading the way with a calm step, she conducted Lord Beverley up the same stairs and through the same passages which she had followed with her niece on the first night of her stay at Langley Hall ; but turning a little to the right at the door of Annie Walton's chamber, she brought the earl into a small detached room, which seemed isolated from every other part of the building.

“Here you will be safe,” she said.

“I think not, dear Lady Margaret,” replied Lord Beverley, with a smile at what he

thought her want of experience in such matters.

“We will see,” she answered, advancing to the other side of the room, where stood a huge antique fire-place, with a chimney-piece of rich wrought stone. “No moving pictures, no sliding panels here,” said Lady Margaret; “but place your hand upon that pillar, my good lord, and push it strongly — more strongly — towards the hearth. There,” she continued, as the whole mass swung back, displaying an aperture large enough for a man to pass, but not without stooping, “you will find a bolt within which will make it as fast as masonry. The stairs lead you into rooms below, where no one can come without my leave. You shall be supplied with all you want.—But, hark! On my life, they have let the men in! Quick, my lord, and bolt the door. I will send somebody soon; but I must go down, lest those girls make some mistake if questioned.”

Lord Beverley entered at once, and feeling

over the face of the stone for the bolt, pushed it home, and made the whole secure. He then paused and listened, waiting patiently for several minutes. At first he could hear no sound in the remote and well-covered place where he was concealed; but at length he caught the noise of voices and steps running hither and thither in the house. They came near, passed away into other chambers on the left, returned, sounded in the passage, and then in the adjoining room. He could perceive that several men entered, examined the wainscot, tried every panel, moved every article of furniture, and at length shook the mantel-piece and the stone pillars on either side of the chimney; but the bolt held close and fast, and the receding steps showed him that these unwelcome visitors had turned their course elsewhere.



## CHAPTER II.

GOOD Lady Margaret Langley had seen troublous days, and was well fitted by a strong understanding to deal with them ; but one of the advantages of misfortune, if I may use so strange a phrase, is that experience of danger suggests precautions which long prosperity knows not how to take, even in the moment of the greatest need. As soon as she had left the Earl of Beverley, instead of going direct to the part of the house where she heard the voices of her unwished-for visitors, she directed her steps through sundry long and intricate passages, which ultimately led her to a small door communicating with the garden, smiling as she did so, at distinguishing the fierce

growl of her good dog Basto in the hall, and the querulous tone of an old man calling loudly for some one to remove the hound, showing, apparently, that some visiting justice was kept at bay by that good sentinel. Passing through the garden, and round by the path across the lawn, Lady Margaret approached the windows of her own withdrawing-room, just as a party, consisting of five militia men with the parliamentary justice of Beverley, entered the chamber in haste; and she heard the justice demand in a sharp tone, addressing Miss Walton and Arrah Neil,—

“Who are you, young women? What are your names?”

The old lady hurried in, to stop anything like an imprudent reply; but she had the satisfaction of hearing her niece answer,—

“Nay, sir! Methinks it is for us to ask who you are, and what brings you hither in such rude and intrusive guise?”

“Well said, my sweet Annie!” thought Lady Margaret; but entering quickly, she

presented herself before the justice, whom she knew, exclaiming,—

“Ha, Master Shortcoat! good morning to you. What brings you hither? and who are these men in buff and bandolier? I am not fond of seeing such in my house. We had trouble enough with them, or their like, a few nights ago.”

“Ay, lady, that is what brings us,” replied the justice. “I have orders from Hull to inquire into that affair; and to search your house for the bloody-minded malignants here concealed, who slaughtered like lambs a number of godly men even within sight of your door, and then took refuge in Langley Hall. I must search, lady—I must search.”

“Search, if you will, from the cellars to the garret,” replied Lady Margaret; “but the story told me by those who did take refuge here was very different, Master Shortcoat. They said that peaceably passing along the country, they were attacked by a body of bloody-minded factious villains, who slaugh-

tered some of them, and drove the rest in here, where finding some of their companions waiting for them, they issued forth again to punish the knaves who had assailed them."

"It's all a lie, good woman," exclaimed an officer of militia. "But who are these girls? for there was a woman amongst them."

"You are a rude companion, sirrah," answered Lady Margaret. "These ladies are of my own family. This one my niece, Mistress Anne Walton; and this my cousin, Mistress Arabella Langley."

"Come, come," said another, interposing, "we are wasting time, while, perhaps, those we seek may be escaping. It is not women we want, but men. Search the house, master justice, with all speed. I will go one way with two or three of the men, and you another with the rest."

"Stay, stay," said Justice Shortcoat, "you are too quick—we cannot make due inquest if you interrupt us so. Lady, I require to know who were the persons in your house,

who went forth to assist the malignants on the night of Wednesday last?"

"Why, I have told you already, Master Shortcoat. You must be hard of hearing. Did I not say they were friends of theirs who were waiting here for them? In these times, when subjects are governors, and servants masters, how can I keep out any one who chooses to come in? That very night one of the men swam the moat, and let down the drawbridge for himself. How am I to stop such things? If I could I would keep every party out that appeared with more than two, be they who they may. I seek but to live a peaceable life; but you, and others like you, break in at all hours, disturbing my quiet. Out upon you all! Search, search where you will! You can find nothing here but myself and my own people."

"Well, we will search, lady," replied the officer of militia, who had spoken before. "Come, worshipful Master Shortcoat, let us not waste more time;" and seizing him by

the arm, he dragged rather than led him away.

The moment he was gone, Lady Margaret whispered in Annie Walton's ear—"Quick, Annie! run to the room where all the maidens sit, and tell them, if asked what mean the clothes in the earl's chamber, and the blood upon them, to say that they are those of one who was killed the other night, and that the body was carried away by his comrades. I will go to the men's hall and to the kitchen, and do the same. You hear, sweet Arrah? such must be our tale;" and away the old lady went. But she found the task of communicating this hint somewhat more difficult than she had expected, for the hall was half full of the parliamentary militia, and she had to send her servants to different parts of the house, one upon one pretence, and another upon another, before she could find the opportunity of speaking with them in private.

In the mean while she heard, with a smile, the feet of the justice and his companions run-

ning through all the rooms and passages of the wide rambling pile of building, except those which, separated from the rest by stone partitions, and forming a sort of house within the house, could only be discovered either by one already acquainted with some of the several entrances, or by the line and rule of the architect. She had just done instructing her servants, not having omitted, as she thought, one of the household, when feet were heard descending the principal stairs, and the perquisitions were commenced in that wing of the hall in which the room inhabited by the Earl of Beverley was situated.

In a few minutes the justice and one of the militia men returned carrying a cloak and a heavy riding boot, and demanding with a triumphant laugh, "Where is he to whom these belong?"

"In the grave, probably," replied Lady Margaret, with perfect composure. "If you are authorized to take possession of dead men's property, you may keep them; and, indeed,

you have a better right to them than I have, for your people shot him, so that you have only to divide the spoil."

"Do you mean to say, Lady Margaret, that the man is dead?" asked Justice Shortcoat, with a look of some surprise and consternation.

"All the better if he be," exclaimed the officer of militia; "'tis but one malignant the less in the world. But let us hear more, worshipful Master Shortcoat. I don't believe this story. Let us have in the servants one by one ——"

"Ay, one by one," said the justice, who was one of the men who may be called Echoes, and repeat other men's ideas in a very self-satisfied tone. "You see about it, sir, and insure there be no collusion."

The whole matter was soon arranged; and Lady Margaret, taking her wonted chair, drew an embroidery frame towards her, through which she passed the needle to and fro with the utmost calmness, while sweet Annie Walton sat with a beating heart beside



Arrah Neil, who, with the tranquil fortitude that had now come over her, watched the proceedings of the intruders as if she had been a mere spectator. The magistrate placed himself pompously at the table in the midst; the officer, who had now been joined by two companions with various other articles from the earl's chamber, stood at Master Shortcoat's right hand to prompt him; and then the servants were called in singly, and asked to whom the clothes belonged which had been found.

"To the gentleman who was killed," replied the man William, who was first examined.

"And where is the corpse?" demanded the officer of militia.

"I do not know," replied the servant; "they took it away with them."

"Was he killed at once, or did he die here?" asked the officer.

"He lingered a little, I believe," answered William.

The justice looked at the officer, and the

latter said, "You may go ;—see him through the hall, Watson."

Another and another servant was called, and all gave the same answers till they came to the maids, who had not been so well or fully instructed by fair Annie Walton as the men had been by her aunt. Their first reply, indeed, was the same—that the gentleman was dead—but when they were interrogated as to the time of his death, they hesitated and stumbled a little ; but they were generally girls of good sense, and contrived to get out of the scrape by saying that they did not know, as they had not seen him till he was dead ; and all agreed that the corpse had been taken away.

At length, however, at the last, appeared the scullion ; and Lady Margaret's face for the first time showed some anxiety, as the girl had not been in the kitchen when she visited it, and, to say truth, had been hearing some sweet words from a soldier in the court. When the usual first question was asked her,

namely, whom the clothes belonged to, she replied,—

“To the gentleman who was brought in wounded.”

“And who died shortly after,” said Lady Margaret, fixing her eyes upon her.

“Do not venture to prompt her, lady,” said the officer, turning sternly towards her.

“Speak, girl, did he die? and tell truth.”

“I never heard as he died,” answered the scullion.

“Do you know where he now is?” asked the justice.

“No, that I don’t,” replied the girl. “I have not seen him to-day.”

Both judge and officer gazed at her with a frowning brow, and demanded, one after the other,—

“Did you see him yesterday?”

Poor Annie Walton’s heart fluttered as if it would have fain broke through her side; but the girl, after a moment’s consideration, replied, somewhat confusedly,—

“I don’t know as I did.”

“Then, when did you see him last?” inquired the militia man.

“I can’t tell,” answered the scullion. “I don’t justly know—I saw him the night he was brought in, for the men laid him down on the floor there, and I saw him through the door chink, just where Basto is lying.”

She pointed to the dog as she spoke, and he, with whom she was by no means a favourite, started up with a sharp growl, and rushed towards her. He was checked by his mistress’s voice, however; but the girl, uttering a terrified shriek, ran out of the room, and the officers with the justice laid their heads together over the table, conversing for some minutes in a low tone.

At length the worshipful magistrate raised his eyes, and turning to Lady Margaret, he said,—

“Madam, it is clear that this is a very dark and mysterious affair; and any one can see with half an eye that you have given shelter

and comfort to notorious malignants. It is, therefore, my unpleasant duty to quarter upon you a guard of twenty men, under this worshipful gentleman, who will take what means he may think proper for discovering the dark practices which clearly have occurred here."

"In this dark clear case, sir," replied Lady Margaret, with a stiff and haughty air, "will it not be better to furnish them with a general warrant? Its having been pronounced illegal will be no obstacle with those who set all law at defiance. As to quartering those men upon a widow lady, I care little about it, so that I do not see them. Keep them away from the apartments of my family, and you may put them where you like. If they come near me, I will drive them forth with that feather broom. Away with you all; and keep out of my sight, wheresoever you bestow yourselves. Or do you intend to spoil the Egyptians, and take my beef and beer, or my goods and chattels?"

"Though you are uncivil to us, lady," said

the officer, who, perhaps, thought that the comfort of his quarters might depend upon fair words, "we do not intend to be uncivil to you. We will give you no trouble so long as you and your people comport yourselves properly; and in the trust that you will do so, I shall now retire and fix the rooms for my men as I shall judge expedient, of course not interfering with your accommodation. Come, Master Shortcoat."

"Stay, sir," said Lady Margaret. "You speak well. Perhaps I was too warm; but all these intrusions into a peaceable household do heat one. I will see that you have all that you want and can desire—I wish to show you no inhospitality," and she bowed with graceful dignity, as the roundhead party retired.

## CHAPTER III.

NIGHT had succeeded to day, and that day had been an uneasy one ; for during the hours of light that remained after the parliamentary militia had taken possession of Langley Hall, Lady Margaret had in vain endeavoured to find some opportunity of opening one of the several doors which led into the private rooms and passages of the house. Wherever she went, she found one or other of the soldiers on the watch, and she became alarmed lest the want of necessary food should, in the earl's weakened state, prove detrimental to his health.

Miss Walton said nothing ; but her beautiful eyes were so full of anxious thought, that

whenever they turned upon her aunt, the good old lady felt her heart ache for the painful apprehensions which she knew were in her fair niece's bosom ; and as the shades of evening fell, she rang for her servant William, and asked him several questions in a low tone. What his answers were, neither Annie Walton nor Arrah Neil could hear for some time ; but at length, in reply to some injunction of his mistress, he said aloud, "I will try, my lady ; but I do not think it will do. He is a sad, sober man, and when they were eating, shortly after they came, he would drink little or nothing."

"Well, give him my message," said Lady Margaret, "and if he will not drink, we must find another means. Warn all the tenants, William, to-morrow early, that they may be wanted ; but now go, and see the wine be the best in the cellar."

The man retired, but in a few minutes after he opened the door again, announcing Captain Hargood,—and the commander of the small



force left at the Hall made his appearance with a ceremonious bow.

“Madam,” he said, “I hope you do not put yourself to inconvenience or restraint to ask a stranger to your table who is here against your will, and in some degree against his own.”

“Not in the least, Captain Hargood,” answered Lady Margaret; “I always have loved and esteemed brave men, whatever be their party; and though, in all that is justifiable, I would never scruple to oppose to the death an enemy, yet where we are not antagonists, I would always wish to show courtesy and forget enmity.”

“I hope, madam, you will not consider me as an enemy,” replied the officer.

“Whoever keeps forcible possession of my fortress,” said the old lady, with a smile, “must be so for the time; but let us not speak of unpleasant things, supper must be served,” and advancing unembarrassed, she rested her hand upon the arm of her un-

welcome guest, and led the way with him to the hall.

But the stout roundhead was not one to lose his active watchfulness by indulging in the pleasures of the table. The wine was excellent, and the servants were always ready to fill for him; but he drank sparingly, and Lady Margaret did not venture to press him, lest her purpose should become apparent, and lead to suspicions beyond.

After partaking lightly of the wine, she rose, and with her two fair companions, retired, leaving him with the potent beverage still on the board, in the hope that he might indulge more freely when he was alone. As soon as they were in the withdrawing-room, she explained to Annie Walton and Arrah Neil, in low but earnest tones, the exact position of the room in which was the entrance to the secret passage which she had opened for Lord Beverley, and the means of making him hear and withdraw the bolt.

“I will send up a basket of food and wine

to your chamber, Annie," she said; "and as soon as all seems quiet in the house, you and our dear Arrah go, by the moonlight if you can, to that place, and try to gain admission. If you should fail, or if you should find any one on the watch, come down to me. They have so scattered their men about, that it is well nigh hopeless before they go to sleep. It would almost seem that they knew whereabouts the doors lie. There is one means, indeed, and that must be taken if all others fail; yet I would fain shrink from it."

"What means is that, dear aunt?" asked Annie Walton.

But the old lady replied that it mattered not; and shortly after they separated, and the two fair girls retired to their chamber. Miss Walton's maids were there ready to aid her in undressing; and though Annie and her friend had much to say to each other, all private conversation was stayed for the time. Shortly after Lady Margaret's chief woman appeared with a covered basket, set it down, and retired

without saying a word; and in a few minutes more Annie sent her maidens to bed, saying that she would sit up for a while, and adding, "Leave me a lamp on that table."

But now that they had the opportunity of speaking more freely, Arrah Neil and her noble friend could but poorly take advantage of it, so eager were they to watch for the diminution of all sounds in the hall. They did speak indeed words of kindly comfort and support; and manifold dreamy reasonings took place on all the events of the day, and their probable consequences; but still they interrupted their speech continually to listen, till all, at length, seemed profoundly still, and Arrah whispered,—

"Now I think we may go."

"Yet but a moment or two, dear Arrah," replied Miss Walton. "Let them be sound asleep."

In deep silence they remained for about a quarter of an hour; but then Annie herself rose, and proposed to go.

“I am grown such a coward, Arrah,” she said, “that I would fain perform this task speedily, and fain escape it too.”

“’T is the desire to do it,” answered her fair companion, “that creates the fear of failing. But let me go, Annie, if you dread it so much.”

“Nay, nay! No hand but mine, for worlds!” exclaimed the young lady. “But come, I am ready; let us go.”

Slowly and quietly opening the door, they issued forth into the passages, and, remembering as well as they could Lady Margaret’s direction, were making their way towards the room to which she had led the earl, when suddenly, out of a neighbouring chamber, walked the officer of militia, and stood confronting them in the midst of the passage. Annie Walton trembled, and caught poor Arrah’s arm, to stop her; but her fair companion was more self-possessed, and whispering, “Come on, show no fear,” she advanced straight towards the officer, saying aloud,—

“Will you have the kindness, sir, to accompany us to the door of Lady Margaret’s chamber? We are afraid of meeting some of your men, who might be uncivil.”

“Do you not think that Lady Margaret may be asleep by this time?” asked the officer, with a doubtful smile.

“Oh, dear no!” replied Annie Walton, who had gained courage from her fair companion’s presence of mind. “She never goes to bed till one or two. Perhaps we may even find her in the withdrawing-room.”

“I think not,” said the officer; “but we can easily see.” And thus speaking, he led the way down, having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the ordinary passages of the house.

The door of the usual sitting-room was ajar, a light was within, and the officer put in his head. Instantly perceiving Lady Margaret Langley seated reading, and, recollecting her threatened vengeance if any one of his band approached her apartments, he

said, "I have escorted these two young ladies hither, madam, as they were afraid to come alone."

"I thank you, sir," replied the old lady, laying down the book. "Down, Basto, down!—Come hither, Annie. Close the door, my sweet Arrah. I thank you, sir. Good night. They are foolish, frightened girls; but I will see them back, when we have done our evening duties."

The perfect tranquillity of the old lady's manner removed the suspicion which Captain Hargood certainly had entertained; and closing the door, he retired to the room he had chosen for himself.

As soon as he was gone, Lady Margaret said, in a low tone, "So you were stopped, I suppose, by that rascal?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Annie Walton, "we had scarce taken twenty paces when he met us, and I was fool enough to lose all judgment; but this dear girl saved us both."

"Well," rejoined Lady Margaret, "there is

but one means, then. I am weak, girls,—very weak,—or I would not have kept the good earl so long in darkness and in hunger, for my own foolish thoughts. Come with me ;” and opening the door which led from the right-hand side of the withdrawing-room to her own chamber, she went in, closing it again when they had both passed, and fastening it with a bolt. She then paused for a moment in the midst, gazing down upon the floor with a look of deep sadness, and then approached a large closet, which she opened. It was full of shelves ; but putting her hand upon one of them, Lady Margaret drew it forth, laid it down beside her, and pushed hard against the one below. It instantly receded with the whole back of the closet, showing the entrance to a room beyond.

“ See ; but say nothing,” whispered the old lady ; and while Annie Walton followed with the lamp, she entered before them.

It was a small room, fitted up somewhat like a chapel, but hung with tapestry. At the



further end was a table, or altar, covered with a linen cloth, yellow with age, and having beneath what Annie Walton imagined to be the chalice and plate of the communion. Above, however, hung the picture of a very young woman, whose sweet and radiant look, yet tender and mournful eyes, might have well accorded with a representation of the Blessed Virgin; but the figure was dressed in the fashion of no very remote time; and as soon as Lady Margaret raised her eyes to it, the tears rose in them—and tottering to one of the large crimson chairs that were ranged along the side, she sank into it, and bent her head in silence.

Annie Walton and Arrah Neil stood and gazed upon the picture, as if they were both fascinated, but neither spoke; and at length Lady Margaret rose again, saying, abruptly, “I am a fool! and will be so no more. This is the chamber of retribution, my sweet Arrah,” she continued, approaching the two fair girls, and taking the lamp out of the hand of Miss

Walton. "Here, for many a year, I and one now gone wept and prayed for forgiveness;" and, holding up the lamp towards the picture, she gazed at it with a dark and mournful look. Then, laying her hand upon the edge of the cloth which covered the table, she seemed about to withdraw it, but paused, and her face became almost livid with emotion. "I will do it!" she said at length; "I will do it—but say nothing—ask no question—utter not a word!"

As she spoke, she cast back the cloth; and lying on the table, which was covered with crimson velvet, appeared a pale and gory human head, severed at the neck. The face was turned up, the eyes closed, the mouth partly open, and the fine white teeth shown. Though pale as ashes, the traces of great beauty remained in the fine chiselled features—the curling lip, covered with the dark moustache; the wide expansive brow, the high forehead—the blue tinge of the eyes shining through the dark fringed lids—all

showed that in life it must have been the face of as handsome a man as ever had been seen; but over all was the grey shade of death.

Annie Walton started back in terror; but Lady Margaret turned to her sternly and sadly, saying, "Foolish girl, it is but wax! For you it has none of those memories that give it life for me.—There, you have seen enough;" and she drew the cloth back again over that sad memento. Then gazing for a moment, again, at the picture, the old lady set the lamp down upon the table; and casting her arms round the fair neck of Arrah Neil, she leaned her eyes upon her shoulder, and wept bitterly.

Annie Walton would not intrude upon her aunt's grief, either by asking any questions or by calling to her remembrance the situation of the Earl of Beverley, although, as soon as the first impression of the extraordinary spectacle which had been presented to her had passed away, the state in which her lover had

been so long kept naturally occurred to her mind. But Lady Margaret, herself a woman of a strong and vigorous character, though somewhat eccentric in her habits of thought, soon roused herself, and starting up she wiped the tears from her eyes, exclaiming, "This is not all folly, my child; but yet any grief, if it prevent us from doing our duty, is a weakness and a wrong. Come, we will soon find the earl."

Miss Walton took up the basket; and Lady Margaret, with the light, approached a door on the other side of the room, which led to a narrow and very steep staircase; but Arrah Neil paused, till the light was nearly gone, to gaze at the picture, and when she at length followed, her eyes too were running over with bright drops. A long passage at the top of the stairs conducted them to a door, which Lady Margaret gently opened, exposing a room within, furnished with a chair, a bed, and a small table, by which the earl was sitting, with his head resting on his hand.

As may be well supposed, he was well pleased to see his visitors, for long solitude in darkness and uncertainty, without occupation, will have a depressing effect upon the firmest heart and best regulated mind. The cause of their long absence was soon explained, and the acceptable stores which they brought being taken from the basket, and deposited on the table, though Annie Walton would have fain remained some time to console her lover in his imprisonment, he felt the danger of her so doing to permit it; and only petitioning that when any one returned, some books might be added to his store, to while away the hours of solitude, he saw them depart, though not without a sigh. No interruption took place on the return of the two young ladies to their room, and the night passed over without any other event deserving of notice.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE household of Lady Margaret Langley was increased, during the day following the adventures related in the last two chapters, by the return of two stout servants, whom she had sent upon various errands to a considerable distance from Langley Hall ; and in the evening the steward and his man came back, as they termed it—though, in truth, they both ordinarily lived in a house and cottage about two miles off—to the dwelling of the good lady. The hind, too, arrived, and took up his lodging in the house ; and the shrewd servant, William, was busy amongst the farmers and tenants, talking with one—whispering with another—winking at a third.

Langley Hall, in truth, became quite a gay place ; for, in addition to the militia men from Beverley, every morning saw five or six good yeomen, sometimes eight or nine, attending Lady Margaret's orders and directions about farming matters. Captain Hargood felt somewhat uneasy ; for these visitors, all stout men, and generally armed, became so numerous, that he saw it was not at all unlikely that, in process of time, he might be outnumbered in the Hall. He perceived that, should such be the case, at any unexpected moment he might be easily overpowered, if the disposition which he had at first made of his men continued ; for, scattered over that large rambling mansion, in order to watch what was taking place in every part at once, there were not to be found more than two or three of the militia together at any one given point ; and it was by no means an easy or rapid process to gather them from their several quarters into one body, for the stairs and passages, the rooms and ante-rooms, the lobbies and galleries, the

halls and corridors, were so intricate, and in such number, that it was a good half-hour's march from one end of the house to the other ; and the shutting of a door, or barricading a passage, might in a moment isolate any one party from the rest. He could not help fancying, too, that Lady Margaret felt the advantage of her position, and that there was something more than chance in this influx of tenantry ; and thus the feeling of security with which he had taken possession of Langley Hall soon disappeared, and he became very uneasy indeed.

In after periods of the civil war, when the bold and decided tone of the parliament had spread to the whole party, and the simple justice, or petty commissioner, knowing that any violence against a malignant would receive countenance and applause from those who had the power of the state in their hands, ventured every excess against their enemies, Captain Hargood would have overcome the difficulty at once by marching off Lady Mar-



garet, and the principal members of her household, to Beverley, or Hull. But the round-head party, in remote provinces, had not yet acquired full confidence either in its strength or in its leaders ; and steps afterwards taken, as a matter of course, were now not even thought of. His only resource, therefore, was to reinforce his numbers, if possible, and to make such changes in the disposition of his men, in the mean while, as would guard against surprise.

During the hours, then, at which the hall was thronged with the tenants and farmers, he gathered his men together into one part of the house, and there kept them till he found that the visitors who alarmed him were departing. But, in truth, this was all that Lady Margaret desired ; and the unpleasant espial being removed from about nine in the morning till about one o'clock, ample time was afforded for very easy communication with the Earl of Beverley, both to cheer him by the society of his friends, and supply him

with all that might be necessary to his comfort.

As only one of the party could venture to be absent at a time, it may easily be supposed that Annie Walton was the person most frequently fixed upon, as she was the one certainly best fitted to console the weary hours of the earl in the strange sort of captivity to which he was reduced; and many and many a happy hour, during the next four days, did the two lovers spend together.

Of the present they had but little to say. No news reached the hall of any importance, and the brief laugh excited by the success of Lady Margaret's stratagem, for driving the militia men into one particular portion of the house, soon passed away. It was upon the past and upon the future, then, that their thoughts and conversation principally turned; but though the mind of Annie Walton certainly rested more often, and more anxiously, upon the coming years than upon the gone, yet the apprehensions that she entertained

regarding them, the too intense interest they excited, and the agitation which the contemplation of all that might take place produced, naturally led her to seek relief in the softened influences of the past; and she would dwell willingly with her lover upon all the thousand little events of early days, showing him, without reserve, all the secrets of her own pure and guileless heart, and seeking playfully, and yet eagerly, to discover those of his.

Nor did he much strive to conceal them, although there were, of course, some things that he would not say; but wherever he saw that she was deeply interested, and that mystery might create doubts injurious to her peace, he was as frank and free as she was, sporting, perhaps, a little with her curiosity, but always satisfying it in the end. He did not, indeed, amuse himself or her, to use the words of a sweet old song that one time cheered my infancy, by

“Tales telling of loves long ago,”

although she was curious to know whether the

heart, the possession of which she so much valued, had never been given to any but herself; and, indeed, could hardly believe that, amongst all the scenes through which he had passed, amongst the fair and beautiful with whom he had mingled, and in all the varying events in which he had taken a part, some one had not been found to love and be beloved, by one whom she felt it difficult to imagine any woman could behold, without feeling the same sensation towards him that she experienced herself.

At first, indeed, she did not venture to question, but merely suggested, with playful smiles, the confession which she strove to extort. Then, when he spoke of beautiful scenes in other lands, or of bright and happy moments in former days, she would laugh, and ask whether there had not been some one near, to give light to the light, and add sweet to the sweetness; and he would reply sportively, "Oh! a multitude, dear Annie! I can assure you, that in those days every woman was fair

to my young eyes, and every smiling jest was full of wit."

But when she pressed him closer still, and inquired whether, amongst the many, there had not been one brighter than them all, who had found means to eclipse the loveliness around, and make herself the beloved, the earl would draw her closer to him, and, gazing on the lids of her downcast eyes, would answer, "Nay, Annie, but I must have your confession first. Have you never loved before? Has no one, ere I knew you, brushed off with a touch the bloom of that dear heart, before it was ripe for me?"

"Never, never!" she cried. "Never, Francis! I have had no one to love. Little as I have seen of the world, few as were those who have frequented our house since I was a mere girl, it was not likely that I should meet with any who should either care to make themselves agreeable to me, or have the power of doing so. I can assure you, that had it not been for my brother Charles, till I met with

you I should have thought men very dull things indeed. We had, it is true, more than once a crowd of roystering cavaliers, and, more frequently still, half a dozen prim puritans staying in the house or in the neighbourhood ; but the first were all too gay for me, the others all too sad ; the one set too fond of their fine clothes and their fine horses, the others too fond of their own selves, for them to care for me, or I to care for them. One man, indeed, asked my father for my hand, when I was a girl of fifteen ; but my father saved me the trouble of saying *no*, by valuing me at too high a price to part with me. But with you, Francis, it is very different : you have mingled with the bright dames of France, and the beautiful ones of Italy and Spain, and I cannot even hope that you should have escaped heart-whole, to lay your first affections at the feet of poor Annie Walton, a country girl, well nigh ignorant of courts and all the graces that you must have seen elsewhere."

"I have seen none like her, Annie," said Lord Beverley, in a tone of deep earnestness, "and I will tell you in truth and sincerity, I never loved till I did see her. I may have admired ; I may have been pleased ; but there have been things in my fate and history which came dim between me and all others, like those glasses which star-gazers use to look upon the sun without having their eyes dazzled ; and even, dearest Annie, when that thick veil was over me the most, I was still the gayest, jesting with the light, laughing with the gay, and draining the bowl of pleasure to the dregs, even when the draught was most tasteless to my lips."

"Indeed," said Annie Walton, gravely ; "that seems strange to me."

"And yet it is true," replied the earl—"nay more, it is common, Annie. Each man has his own secrets in his heart, and each his own way of hiding them—one in a dark, gloomy pall, one in a gay and glittering veil ; and the latter was my case, sweet one. But,

perchance you have never heard the tale of what happened to my house in older times. My mother's brother was an Irish lord of a high and noble nature, wild, daring, and somewhat rash. For some poor and trifling fault he was pursued, unjustly I believe—at all events with unjust severity—in courts he did not recognise, to the confiscation of his property. He laughed such laws to scorn, however, defied them to take him from his mountain-holds, and added attainture to the judgment against him; but he had strong enemies even in his native country. Troops were led up through passes that he thought secure by men who knew them but too well. His castle—for it was a house well fortified—was attacked and stormed, he being absent from it at the time; and my poor sister, a young child I loved most dearly, then but waiting for an opportunity of returning to her own home, perished in the flames, for they burned his dwelling to the ground. He himself was taken on his return, and with indecent



haste, and many illegal circumstances, was condemned and executed."

"Good heaven!" cried Annie Walton, a wild fancy suddenly presenting itself to her mind. "Can it be, that Arrah Neil is your sister? There are several strange things regarding her, and I may tell you she is not what she seems."

"No," answered Lord Beverley; "oh, no, my beloved, that could not be. My sister would now be seven or eight years older than poor Arrah, and besides the body was not so disfigured that it could not be recognised. She died beyond all doubt. In grief and indignation my father and my mother appealed to the king of England, strove to remove my uncle's trial to some more fit and competent tribunal before his sentence was pronounced, showed the evident illegality of many of the proceedings against him, petitioned, prayed in vain. He died as I have said, and then to remonstrances they added complaints and reproaches, withdrew from the court, and uttered

words which were construed into high offences, fines and punishments followed upon those whose hands had aided to uphold the monarchy, and in bitter disgust at man's ingratitude, in abhorrence of his falsehood, and indignation at his injustice, I quitted England, wandering over many distant lands, and resolving never to return. I sought forgetfulness, Annie — I sought pleasure, amusement, anything which, if it could not take the thorn out of my heart, might at least assuage the pain. — But hark ! there is the signal that you must return," and with one brief caress they parted.

## CHAPTER V.

ANNIE WALTON on her return to Lady Margaret's sitting room, accompanied by Arrah Neil, who had given the signal agreed upon as a notification that longer stay would be dangerous, found her good aunt seated with her head leaning on her hand, listening to some intelligence brought by her faithful servant, William, who stood before her, with his usual well-satisfied and shrewd look, detailing a valuable discovery which he had just made.

"It is indeed so, my lady," he said; "they have corrupted her, there can be no doubt. Give me a puritan for ploughing with the heifer. I saw the fellow Jones and the girl, with their two heads near together, in the

court, and as I was close to the casement, and the casement was open, I drew up against the wall, saying to myself, traitors make eavesdroppers."

"What did they say? what did they say?" demanded Lady Margaret. "We must come to a quick decision, William."

"Why, all I heard, my lady, was, that the trullion said to the roundhead, 'It is quite sure, for I saw her go in myself, and when she had been there for two or three minutes, I walked in too, just as if I was going to look for something. There's no other way out of the room to be seen, and yet she was not there. She didn't come out for an hour either, for I watched.' Then the man answered—'Well, we must wait till to-morrow, when the reinforcements are coming up from Beverley. We shall be enough then to overpower all resistance.'"

"Said he so, said he so?" cried Lady Margaret, with a thoughtful air. "We must contrive means to frustrate them. Quick,

William," she continued, after a moment's meditation, "go and keep the people here. Tell the farmers I will give them a supper; and if you can, contrive to get more to come up. Then let some one go out and gather news in the country; see what 's the truth of this report that came last night, of troops marching, and who they are."

The man hastened away to obey her orders; and Miss Walton gazed anxiously in her aunt's face, inquiring,—

"Do you think they have discovered him?"

"They have discovered something, Annie, that is clear," replied Lady Margaret, "and enough to lead them to more; but they shall not have him notwithstanding, even if we should fight for it. I know the house better than they do, and could lead them into many a pretty trap if I liked it. We can get fifteen or sixteen men together; and then they are but twenty. Then there 's Basto; he 's worth three roundheads at any time—though he 's but an old dog—and all the women besides.

Why, you would fight for this good earl, wouldn't you, Annie, my love? else you are not fit for a soldier's bride. On my life, I should like to see you in a pair of jack-boots," and the old lady laughed gaily enough, to cheer her fair niece, whose heart was more easily alarmed than her own.

"Could he not escape in the night, dear Lady Margaret," said Arrah Neil; "I went to walk out by the moonlight last night, and no one noticed me."

"Because you are a woman, dear child," answered Lady Margaret. "He must have a horse too, for though his wound is well enough now, he could not walk far. However, it must be thought of, if other things should fail. But we must go and hold counsel with this good lord. Well, William, what more?"

"Why only, my lady, I have been asking Farmer Heathcote about the troops moving; and he says, he is sure of it, he saw the men himself. They seem to be cavaliers

too, and a good troop of them ; but that was yesterday evening, and they were then ten miles off."

"That 's unfortunate," replied his lady, "for if we could have given them notice we might have had help, and it would have been some satisfaction to enclose these rat-catchers in their own trap. However, you go now and watch Madam Maud for the next two hours ; never take your eye off her, and be sure she does not come in this part of the house. You two girls stay here, I will be back presently," and thus saying she retired to her own chamber, sought the private passage into the apartments where the earl was concealed, and passing with a grave look through that which she called the chamber of atonement, threaded a long and narrow corridor constructed in the wall of the building, and mounted a staircase of no greater width, which led to the sleeping room of Lord Beverley, where she found him reading one of the books with which she had taken care to supply him.

“Well, my dear lord,” she said, “they have found us out, I fear.”

“Indeed, Lady Margaret,” replied the earl calmly; “then I suppose the sooner I quit my present quarters the better.”

“I don’t think so, my lord,” replied the old lady; “I am not sure that it will not be wise to have a struggle for it, and that very speedily. We have got fifteen stout men in the house, and you make sixteen. They with their captain are twenty-one. I have a good store of arms here too, and I could bring the people round, or part of them, through these passages to fall upon them in the rear, while the others attacked them in the front.”

“No, no, my dear lady,” replied the earl, smiling; “that must not be done on any account. In the first place, we might lose the day, and then you and yours, and all that is most dear to me on earth, would be exposed to violence of which I dare not think. The fire of musketry, too, in such a house as this might lead to terrible disasters, and besides,



whatever were the result, unless Hull fall and the king can hold this part of Yorkshire, you would be obliged to fly from your own dwelling and give it up as a prey to the parliamentary soldiery. It must not be thought of. If you can but keep these men from pushing their discoveries farther till nightfall, and get me out by the most private way, I will go and take my chance alone. It is the only course, depend upon it."

"Oh, we will keep them at bay," replied Lady Margaret. "They have been quaking for their lives the last three days, and, while my stout yeomen remain in the house, dare not stir one from another for fear of being taken unawares. I have ordered my men to remain all day, and have promised them supper at nightfall; so we are secure till then, and in the mean while you may rest safe, for sooner than they should break in here, I will burn the house about their ears. If you are resolved to go——"

"Quite," replied the earl.

“Then I will despatch one of the young men,” replied Lady Margaret, “as if he were going home, to have a horse ready for you on the road to York. He can come back again to help us when it is done. In the meanwhile I will send you food and wine, that you may be strong for your ride; but I must tell you that there is a party of horse out about Market Weighton, said to be cavaliers, and it were well that you should be upon your guard if you fly that way, lest they should prove daws in peacocks’ feathers.”

“Nay, that cannot well be,” replied the earl. “If I be not much mistaken, the news I sent by Walton will soon bring the king before the gates of Hull. It would not surprise me if these were some of his majesty’s own parties, and I will direct my steps towards them with all speed.”

Some further conversation took place regarding the arrangements to be made; and it was agreed that, as soon as Lady Margaret thought the earl’s escape might be attempted

with a probability of success, either she herself, or one of her fair companions, should visit him and give him notice; and after all had been thus settled, Lady Margaret, taking her leave of him, returned to the room where she had left her niece and Arrah Neil.

She found them speaking eagerly, poor Arrah's colour somewhat heightened, and Annie Walton's eye bent down, with a dewy drop resting on the lid.

"Nay, but tell my aunt," said Miss Walton. "Indeed, dear Arrah, you should tell her."

"No," replied Arrah Neil, with her own wild eagerness, "I will tell no one," and then turning to Lady Margaret, she laid her hand upon her arm, gazing with an appealing look in her face, and saying, "I have a scheme, dear lady, a scheme which Annie opposes; but it is a good scheme too; and she only fears it on account of danger to myself. Now, I fear no danger in a good cause; and I am sure you will trust me, will you not, dear Lady Margaret?"

"That I will, my child," replied Lady Margaret Langley, "and ask no questions either."

"Nay, but hear," cried Annie Walton, "she is always ready to sacrifice herself for others, and if she does not tell you, I will, my dear aunt."

"Nay, nay," replied Lady Margaret, "you will not betray counsel, Annie, I am sure. Let her have her own way. It is right, I will answer for it; and if it be too generous for men, God will repay it. I will trust her."

Annie Walton shook her head; but the conversation dropped there; and the good old lady proceeded to make all her preparations for the execution of her scheme.

The hours went by, the yeomen still remained at the hall. Captain Hargood continued to act upon the plan which he had previously followed; but showed no slight symptoms of uneasiness at the prolonged occupation of the house by Lady Margaret's tenantry, appearing from time to time with an indifferent and sauntering air, which ill con-

cealed no small degree of apprehension at all that he remarked, and retiring speedily to his men again, without venturing to suffer them to separate for a moment.

The hour of supper came on, and the table in the hall was crowded. Lady Margaret appeared for a moment, and bade her guests make merry; but two of her servants were stationed in the vestibule beyond, which communicated with the stairs and passages that led to the part of the house in possession of the militia, and whenever a step was heard above, one of them approached the foot of the staircase, and listened, to insure against surprise.

Night fell, and as soon as it was completely dark, Annie Walton accompanied her aunt to the good dame's own chamber, and while Lady Margaret herself remained there, proceeded with a lamp through the dark passages in the wall, to give her lover the warning agreed upon.

They might be pardoned, if they lingered a

moment or two together; but at length descending with a quiet step, they approached the chamber where Lady Margaret waited. As soon as the door opened, the old lady held up her finger, saying, "Hush! I heard a noise just now; but I think it is merely those clowns in the hall roaring over their liquor. Let us listen, however."

They paused for a minute or two, but all was quite still.

"It is quiet now," said the earl. "We should hear, if any one was in your sitting room, and I am to go out into the fields by that way, you say."

"Yes; it is all quiet now," said Lady Margaret; and advancing to the door which led to the withdrawing-room, she opened it quietly but quickly, followed close by the earl and Annie Walton. No sooner was it open, however, than Lady Margaret stopped with a start; and Annie Walton, with a low cry, clung to her lover's arm—for the room before them was full of soldiery.

## CHAPTER VI.

“HA, ha, ha!” cried Hargood, with a dry, mocking laugh. “So the dead have come to life again! Stand, sir, and give an account of yourself.—Lady, you are a mighty skilful plotter, but we have doubled upon you, and I will not quit this house till I find this bird’s nest.”

“Run round, Annie,” whispered Lady Margaret to her niece, “through the secret chamber, by the passage to the left, and the door in the wall, where you will see a bolt. It will lead you to the hall. Bring our men upon them from behind: we will fight for it still.”

Miss Walton took a step to obey; but the movement was not unperceived by the captain

of the militia, who exclaimed in a loud voice, turning his head slightly towards his men,—

“Cover them with your guns!—Whoever stirs a step, I order them to fire!” he added, addressing the party at the entrance of the room.

But the stout-hearted old lady was not to be daunted; and, motioning the earl back, she suddenly shut-to the door, turned the key, and stepped behind the shelter of the wall, drawing Annie with her.

There was a momentary pause, to hear if Captain Hargood would keep his word; but not a gun was fired, and Lady Margaret reiterated her desire that Annie would run round and bring her tenantry from the hall, into the rear of the roundheads.

“But no,” she cried, interrupting herself. “Come with me, Annie. Come with me, my lord. They must be some time breaking in.”

“It is useless, I fear, dear lady,” said the earl. “They have better information than we imagined, and I think have been reinforced.



There seems to me to be more than twenty men, so that most probably your people are disarmed."

"Hark!" cried Annie Walton,—“there is a trumpet without! Oh, they have many more with them, depend upon it!”

“A trumpet!” cried Lady Margaret, listening, and her withered face assuming a look of joy as she heard the long, shrill blast ringing upon the air. “So there is; so there is! Cavaliers, to the rescue! This is our dear Arrah’s doing. These are king’s troops, my lord. No roundheaded puritan ever blew a blast like that.”

“On my life, I believe it is true!” cried the earl, approaching the window and looking out. “A party have crossed the stream, and are coming over the meadows.”

As he spoke, there was a loud murmuring noise in the neighbouring chamber, and then the sound of a blow, as if from an axe, upon the door of the room in which they were. The earl instantly threw open the casement, and

vaulted out ; and the next moment his voice was heard, calling loudly, " Hither, hither !" At the same time, however, the blows upon the door were repeated, and though made of strong, solid oak, it crashed, and one panel gave way.

" Quick, Annie !" cried Lady Margaret ; " let us through the other door. We can set them at defiance yet." But just as they reached it, a still heavier blow of the axe dashed the lock from its fastenings, and the broken door flew back.

At the same moment, however, a man sprang into the open window. It was the Earl of Beverley ; but another, and another followed. The casement on the right, too, was burst open, and two or three leaped in at a time, casting themselves in the way of the advancing militia men.

" Down with your arms, traitors !" cried a voice that Miss Walton thought she remembered.

" Back, Annie ! Back, my beloved !—

Away, Lady Margaret! Keep out of the fire!" exclaimed the earl; and, drawing her niece with her, the old lady retired into what she called the Chamber of Atonement, pushing the door nearly to, but not quite.

The next instant a musket was discharged; then came volley after volley, then the clash of swords, and cries and shouts, and words of command, with every now and then a deadly groan between, while through the chink of the door that was left open, crept the pale blue smoke, rolling round, with a sulphurous smell, and the blast of the trumpet echoed from without, as if calling up fresh spirits to the fray.

Lady Margaret Langley held her niece's hand firmly in hers, while Annie Walton bent her fair brow upon her old relation's shoulder, and struggled with the tears that would fain have burst forth.

The strife in the neighbouring room seemed to last an age, though in truth its duration was but a few minutes, and then came a pause,

not of absolute silence, for the sounds were still various and many, but there was a comparative stillness, and a voice was heard speaking, though the words were indistinct. The moment after some one near exclaimed,—

“Lay down your arms, then, traitors! We will grant no conditions to rebels with arms in their hands. Hie to Major Randal, Bare-colt.—Tell him to guard well every door, that no one escape. Now, sir, do you surrender?”

Annie Walton recognised her brother's voice, and murmured, “He, at least, is safe.”

“We will surrender upon quarter, sir,” answered the voice of Captain Hargood.

“You shall surrender at discretion, or die where you stand,” answered Lord Walton. “Make your choice quickly, or we fire!”

Almost as he spoke there came a dull clang, as of arms grounded suddenly on the wooden floor; and, greatly to the relief of poor Annie Walton's heart, the voice of Lord Beverley was heard exclaiming,—

“Treat them gently, treat them gently!”

They are prisoners, and must abide his majesty's pleasure."

"Thank God!" said Miss Walton; "thank God!"

"Hush!" said Lady Margaret. "Let us look out, Annie. There is a smell of burning wood."

As she spoke, she approached the door and opened it. Annie Walton followed close upon her steps, and gazed into the room beyond. It was a sad and fearful scene. The bed-chamber of Lady Margaret, in which the principal struggle had taken place, was comparatively dark, receiving its only light from the glare of the lamp and sconces in the drawing-room on the other side. The room was well nigh filled with men; others were seen through the open door, and every sort of attitude into which the human figure can be thrown was displayed amongst them. At the further side of the chamber appeared Captain Hargood, and some eight or nine of the militia, with their arms cast down, and gloomy

sullen despondency upon their faces. Near them lay three or four others, still and motionless; one fallen upon his back, with his arms extended; one upon his face, with his limbs doubled up beneath him. A little more in advance was another militia man, sitting on the ground, supporting himself with one hand upon a chair, while the other was pressed tight upon his side; and beside Lady Margaret's bed knelt a young cavalier, with his long and fair curling hair streaming down his shoulders, and his face buried in the bed-clothes. Several of the royalist party were stretched upon the ground near, the faces and hands of most of the others were bloody and grimmed with gunpowder, and several were seen in different parts of the room tying up the wounded limb, or staunching the flowing blood.

In the front stood Lord Walton and the Earl of Beverley;—the one armed, and with the stern frown of vehement excitement upon his lofty brow; the other with no arms but a

sword, and with his fine and speaking countenance, animated certainly, but calm and open. Hanging in a thick cloud over the whole were wreaths of sulphurous smoke, and a stream of a lighter colour was finding its way in through the open door, and slowly mingling with that which the discharge of fire-arms had produced.

The party of the cavaliers was far the most numerous, and at the moment when Lady Margaret looked in, several of them were advancing to secure the prisoners. Lord Walton was in the act of giving various orders, from which it was apparent that the house was surrounded by a considerable party of the royalist cavalry; but no one seemed to notice, in the interest of the scene before them, the fact that there was, as Lady Margaret had observed, a strong and growing smell of burning wood, or that ever and anon, across the smoke which was finding its way in from the next room, came a fitful flash, unlike the quiet and steady light of the candles.

For a short time, even Lady Margaret's attention was withdrawn from what she had remarked to the striking scene before her; but after a moment's pause she exclaimed,—

“Charles, Charles, there is something on fire in the drawing-room.”

Lord Walton started and turned round, gave a smile to Annie and his aunt, and then seeming suddenly to catch the meaning of her words, he directed a look towards the door, and instantly strode forward, passing Captain Hargood and the prisoners, and entering the drawing-room.

The moment that he was actually within that chamber, his voice was heard exclaiming aloud,—

“Here, Wilson, Hardy! Help here—the place is on fire!” and a general rush was made towards the other room, where it was found that some spark, or piece of lighted wadding, having fallen upon the low hangings, had set the whole in a flame, which, communicating itself to the old dry panelling and carved



cornices, was running round the chamber on all sides.

Every exertion was now made to extinguish the fire. Some of the soldiers were sent, under Lady Margaret's direction, to get buckets from the hall, where they found and released the tenantry and servants, who had been locked in by the militia, and secured under a guard. All efforts, however, proved vain. The flames spread from room to room ; but little water was to be procured, except from the stream, and Lord Walton and the earl soon turned their attention to save the valuable furniture, pictures, and plate.

The scene of confusion that ensued is indescribable ; and indeed, to the mind of Annie Walton herself, it all seemed more like a dream than a reality, till she found herself standing in the gardens of the house, with her hands clasped in those of Arrah Neil, and old Major Randal saying a few words of somewhat dry, but kindly compliment ; while Lady Margaret at her side, patted the head of her

old dog, Basto, murmuring, "Let it burn, boy, let it burn! It has lasted its time, and seen many a heart-ache. So let it burn, for the villains have not had their way, and the right has triumphed."

To Annie Walton, however, it was a sad sight. Twice, within a few months, had she beheld the place where she had made her home a prey to the flames; and though she was not one to give way to idle superstitions, it seemed as if it were a warning that she was no more to have a fixed abode, and she said to herself with a sigh —

"Well, I will follow Charles wherever fortune shall lead him. Peace and repose, security and comfort, are gone from the land; and I must share the troubles of the rest."

A little in advance of the spot where she stood, guarded by two of the soldiers of the troop, was a large pile of plate and a number of other valuable articles, and as Miss Walton was thus thinking, her brother approached

Lady Margaret, at a rapid pace, from the house, saying,—

“My dear aunt, I fear it is impossible to save any part of the building. Where shall we send these things for safety?”

“Let the house burn, my boy! let the house burn!” said Lady Margaret. “It is not worth the hair of an honest man’s head to save it. Take the pictures, and all the rest of the things, but the plate, down to the steward’s, and especially the papers. As to the silver, we will carry it away to the king at York. He may need it more than I shall.”

“He is not at York, my dear aunt,” replied Lord Walton. “Ere noon to-morrow I trust he will be in Hull. Luckily, we were on our march, and not very far distant from the Hall, when our dear Arrah here found us out, and told us of the strait in which you were placed:” as he spoke, he took Arrah Neil’s fair hand, and pressed his lips upon it warmly; and Lady Margaret, suddenly laying her hand upon his arm, exclaimed,—

“ Ah, Charles ! when I am dead you must be her protector.”

“ I will,” replied Lord Walton ; and then added, still more earnestly, “ I will.”

Arrah Neil gazed steadfastly in his face, and her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

## CHAPTER VII.

It is quite abominable to have left Diggory Falgate for such a length of time in a cold damp vault, without any body to keep him company but rats and mice, and such small deer ; but yet, dearly beloved reader, it could not be helped without evident injustice to more important personages. Not that Diggory Falgate was an unimportant person, nor that his stay in the vault was unimportant to this history ; far from it, as you shall speedily hear. The reader has already perceived that he was a man of action, fond of an enterprise, liking a certain portion of excitement ; not always, indeed, quite confident of himself, and consequently exaggerating a little his sayings and doings, in order to keep himself up to the mark.

He drew back the shade of the lantern then, as we have before said in the end of the second volume of this veracious history, and looked about. His next step was not quite determined, and it was wise to look about him. It always is wise, indeed, to look about one before one acts ; but, nevertheless, the glance that Diggory gave around did not serve to strengthen him in any resolution, or guide him in any course of action. On the contrary, it confused his mind, and shook his firmness. The first feeling when Mr. Dry and the sexton made their escape from his pursuit, taking him to be a ghostly enemy, was one of triumph. But when he came to examine in what that triumph consisted, he felt induced to exclaim, like Napoleon, “ Is this a victory ? ”

He was master of the field, it was true—the foe had fled ; but there he was, left alone with nothing but coffins and shrouds, and mouldering remnants of humanity scattered around him. The door, too, was bolted ; he had heard

them fasten it — the other door they had talked of might be locked ; and he might have to remain where he was till some person in the neighbourhood chose to die and be buried, or till hunger, fright, cold, and solitude, added his bones to the bones that were mouldering around. He calculated the chances ; he entered into the details with painful minuteness ; he knew that the parish was large, but very thinly peopled. There might be a funeral once a quarter but not more, except when some epidemic reigned in Hull, and people took a fancy for country lodging before or after death. Then he thought, with a glimpse of hope, that on Sunday there would be a congregation in the church, and he could make them hear ; but Sunday was a long way off, for this was only Wednesday, and Diggory Falgate set himself to compute how long he could hold out : Thursday, Friday, Saturday ! Three days and a half ! He had often fasted two, for very good reasons ; but then it was not in a vault ; it was not amongst

dead corpses. It was under the free sky, with the fresh breath of heaven blowing on his cheek, and beautiful nature refreshing him with bright sights. The case was very different at present, and his knees began to shake at the very thought.

Then, however, he did what he should have done at first, but that imagination, when she gets the bit between her teeth, is such a runaway jade, that she carries one through all the ponds and quagmires of possibility in five minutes. He set out in search of the other door, to see whether there was any need of alarming himself at all. He took two steps forward, and then a third; the fourth struck against something that made a sort of creaking sound—something softer than the skull, even of a man of fashion; and holding down the lantern he perceived the basket of Ezekiel Dry. His heart was instantly revived, and stooping over it he drew forth the bottle of genuine Nantes, which the worthy puritan had boasted of, and with a good conscience he



put it to his mouth. The contents had certainly been diminished by the original proprietor and his friend; but still there was nearly half a bottle left, and that he thought, with prudence and economy, would serve to keep him up till he could get help. There was some bread and cheese, too, in the basket, and the mouthful of spirits having acted speedily with cheering effect, he looked upon himself as provided against the worst contingency; and in a moment after his eye lighted on a crow-bar, a mallet, and a chisel, with which he flattered himself he could unbar any door that ever yet was closed.

All Diggory Falgate's speculations, however, were vain, useless, unnecessary, as nine out of ten of all our speculations are. When he walked on, threading the lanes of coffins, till he reached a part of the vault where it was crossed by another under the chancel, there on his right hand stood the door that led into the churchyard, wide open, with the moonlight shining in quite pleasantly. All

his alarm took flight in a moment, the lion returned to his heart; and after an instant's pause he said to himself, "Hang me if I do not see before I go what these fellows were hunting after;" and with this doughty resolution he walked back, and began to examine the scene of Mr. Dry's operations.

There stood the coffin on the ground with the lid raised, by tearing the screws out of the wood-work, and only holding by one at the end where the feet were placed. It was a very plain coffin; no velvet, no gilding spoke it to be that which contained the dust of high estate or noble birth; but simple black cloth was the covering, and a small lackered plate upon the lid, bore inscribed some letters, which the painter held the lantern to decipher. It was not without difficulty that he did so, and then could make nothing of them, for they were but

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The painter paused, and gazed in silence :  
“ There must be something more under this,”  
he said at length, “ or that old villain would  
not have come here to break open the coffin.  
I wish Captain Barecolt had told me more,  
for I cannot help thinking that he and that  
pretty young lady have some interest in this  
affair. I have a great mind to see what is in  
the inside—there is but one screw left in. It  
would be easily taken out.”

He stooped and took up the chisel ; but  
then paused again in doubt and hesitation.  
“ Well !” he said, “ I can put it in again, if I  
find anything. There is no harm in looking ;”  
and quietly applying the chisel to the pur-  
poses of a turnscrew, without venturing to  
use any such violence as those who preceded  
him had displayed, he drew out the last remain-  
ing screw ; and then looked with an anxious  
face at the coffin-lid, with some feelings of awe  
and reluctance. Then giving a glance round  
the vault, he removed the covering, and laid it  
down against the neighbouring pile.

Lifting the lantern, Falgate looked into the last receptacle of what had once been young, and fresh, and beautiful. There was the dusty shroud, somewhat mouldy but not decayed; and as the face of the dead was covered with a cloth none of the ghastly appearances of corruption were visible. But the falling of the drapery of death, the sharp lines and angles that the folds presented, told plainly and solemnly that the flesh had long returned to dust, and that nothing but the bones remained uncrumbled. One thing, however, instantly attracted the poor painter's attention—a piece of parchment, covered with writing, lay upon the breast, and taking it up he read it with care. The words seemed to direct him to a further search, and putting his hand to the left side of the shroud, though with some apparent unwillingness, he drew forth a small packet, folded up and sealed. Blowing away the dust from it, after a few moments' consideration, he wrapped it in the parchment, and put it into his pocket, saying, "If I do not

take it, others will, who will make a bad use of it. I will convey it to those who have a right to have it, if God helps me out of this scrape."

Then replacing the lid of the coffin nearly as he had found it, he ate some of the bread and cheese, applied his lips again to the bottle of Nantes, and walking to the door, peeped out into the churchyard. All was still and quiet, the moon shining upon the gravestones, and the wind whispering through the old yews; and stripping off the surplice which he had found in the vestry, Diggory Falgate stole forth into the open air, got over the low wall, and made speed towards some trees that he saw at a distance.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE small town of Beverley was as full as it could hold. It does not, indeed, seem at any time well calculated to hold a great many, but it is wonderful how elastic towns, and even houses, are, when the inhabitants have a good mind to make room for others. It was, or seemed to be, as full as it could hold however, as I have said, when about noon, a body of about three hundred horse, followed at the distance of a quarter of a mile by a mixed troop of gentlemen and ladies, with a small party escorting some thirty-five or forty prisoners and two or three waggons, entered the place, and marched up the principal street. A number of gay cavaliers were lounging

about at the doors of inns and private houses : some companies of train-bands were seen in the more open spaces, and guards appeared at the doors of the town-house, from the windows of which several heads were leaning forth, gazing listlessly upon the scene below. All was gay and pleasant confusion ; for the party of the parliament took care to keep out of sight ; and the royalists, exulting in the arrival of the king, were doing their best to show a hearty welcome to his court. Though somewhat less than two thousand cavalry, and a small infantry force, consisting entirely of train-bands, with half a dozen light pieces of artillery, certainly did not show much like an army, yet hope and excitement magnified the numbers ; and the good townsmen of Beverley, as they reckoned up, with the exaggerating powers of imagination, more noblemen than they had ever seen in the parish before, and calculated the troop which each could bring into the field, if he were willing, never doubted that, if the king had been so pleased,

he might have brought a much larger host to the siege of Hull, and believed that many more would actually follow.

In this supposition, indeed, they were encouraged by a number of houses being already marked out as quarters for different persons, who had not yet appeared—and amongst the rest, a handsome brick building, in a garden, on the side of Hull, had been assigned to the expected party of Lord Walton—and as soon as the head of the troop I have mentioned appeared, a man who had been waiting by the side of a saddled horse, at the door of the town-house, sprang into the saddle, and riding up to the commanding officer—our old friend, Major Randal—informed him of the direction he was to take.

This old officer halted his men to let the party behind come up, and two or three gentlemen, on foot, advanced and spoke with him for a moment or two, while such exclamations as—“Indeed! burned to the ground do you say?—What! Langley Hall burned down?



—I saw a light over that way, as I was marching.—About nine, was it not?" were heard as they conversed.

"Pooh!" cried Randal, as one of the gentlemen, for want of other amusement, asked him to describe all that had taken place; "I am not good at telling stories, my lord. Ask Barecolt there; he has always one ready—and if not, he will make one. But here comes Lord Walton and the Earl of Beverley, with the ladies from the Hall, and we must go on. March!"

The troop followed; and on the whole party went, to the quarters which had been provided for them—the soldiery billeted in certain ale-houses and cottages in the vicinity, and the higher personages in the house which has been mentioned.

The bustle of arrival was soon over; all orders were given, all arrangements made—and the ladies and gentlemen in whom we are most interested were assembled in the hall of the house—a large and handsome room, lined

with dark carved oak, and possessing four windows, which looked out into a garden, well arranged, according to the taste of that day, and surrounded by high walls.

In the march from Langley Hall, as may be supposed, much had been told to Lord Walton; but it had been confined to the events that had taken place since his departure from York, and there was another subject, upon which he was anxious for information. As he stood talking with Lady Margaret, while the Earl of Beverley and Miss Walton gazed forth from one of the windows, the young nobleman's eye fixed upon Arrah Neil, who, seated in a chair at some distance, with her look full of deep but tranquil thought, was caressing the large dog, which, from her very first arrival at Langley Hall, had shown so strange a partiality for her.

"Tell me, my dear aunt," said Lord Walton, interrupting what the good lady was saying, in respect to a proposed visit to the king; "tell me what is all this about that sweet girl;

Annie says she has a strange tale to relate; and Captain Barecolt has already roused my curiosity. Has anything more been heard since I went to York?"

"Nothing, Charles, nothing," replied Lady Margaret. "A strange tale, did Annie say? I have heard nothing of it, and yet I cannot cast from my mind the belief, that if that poor dog could speak, he would tell us as strange a tale as one could wish to hear. Oh! those dumb witnesses of all the many acts done, as we think, in secrecy and solitude, if they had but a voice, what dark and fearful things would be trumpeted to the ear!—'Tis as well that they have not. But let us go and ask her;" and walking up to Arrah, who looked up at her approach, she laid her hand kindly on her shoulder, saying, "Annie has told Charles, dear child, that you have something strange to relate to him. You had better speak soon, my Arrah, for no one can count upon these soldiers for a minute. They go hither and thither, like the winds and clouds."

The blood mounted slightly into the cheek of Arrah Neil, and she said, after a slight hesitation, "I must tell him alone, dear lady Margaret. I would fain tell you too, because I know you would advise and help me well; but they made me promise that I would only tell him and Annie."

"Nay, my child, I seek not to know," replied lady Margaret; "I have had too many sad secrets in my life, and desire no more—and yet, Arrah, and yet," she added, "there might be a tale for you to tell—but it is a dream—a wild, idle dream—no more of it! Go with him into the gardens, my child, and tell him what you have to say."

Arrah Neil rose timidly, and raised her eyes to Lord Walton's face as he stood beside his aunt; but grave and somewhat stern as he sometimes seemed to others, to her he was always gentleness itself, and taking her hand, he drew her arm through his, and led her towards the gardens.

Lady Margaret seated herself where Arrah

had been sitting, and bending down her head over the dog, continued talking to him in a low murmuring voice for some minutes. Annie Walton and the Earl of Beverley remained conversing in the window, and their eyes soon rested upon Lord Walton and Arrah Neil, as they walked up and down one of the broad gravel walks. The face of the young nobleman was grave and attentive; but from time to time he raised his look to his fair companion's countenance, and seemed to ask some questions. Arrah Neil's gaze was most frequently bent upon the ground, but nevertheless at different periods of their conference, she glanced for a single instant eagerly at the face of Charles Walton, as if seeking to discover what impression her story made upon him, and then, with downcast eyes, again went on with her tale.

Annie Walton felt for her; for there was something in her heart that made her sure the telling of that tale to the ear that heard it, would be matter of no light emotion to poor

Arrah Neil. She would have given worlds to see her brother smile, to know that he spoke gentle words, and kind encouragement; but he turned up and down the walk, again and again, with the same thoughtful air, the same high and lofty bearing—not proud, not harsh, but grave and calm. And yet it was better as it was, for Arrah Neil knew him well, and loved him dearly as he was; and any deviation from his natural character, any softer, any tenderer movement, might have agitated and rendered her incapable of going on with tranquil clearness. At length, however, when it seemed all at an end—the story told as far as she could tell it—the whole truth known, as far as she knew it herself—Lord Walton suddenly paused, and casting his arms round her who had been the object of his house's bounty, pressed a warm kiss upon her glowing cheek. Then taking her hand in his, he drew it within his arm again, and led her back towards the house with her face crimson, and her limbs trembling with deep emotion.

The Earl of Beverley turned to Annie Walton with a smile.

“God’s blessing on them,” he said, “and on all hearts that love.”

Miss Walton started—“You do not understand it, Francis,” she replied.

“Yes, dear one, I do,” said her lover ; “I have seen it, long. I know Charles Walton well, and the share that generous enthusiasm and calm reasoning prudence have in his nature. He has loved rashly, and checked his love. Some great obstacle is gone, and love has now the sceptre. He is not a man to debase that which he loves, or I should have feared for poor Arrah Neil ; but he is not one, either, to sacrifice what he thinks right, even to his heart’s dearest affections ; and therefore, dear Annie, I have grieved for him. But, my beloved,” he added, speaking even lower than before, “between us there is no such barrier as has always seemed to exist between them. A period of repose must soon come, and then surely——”

Annie Walton cast down her eyes, and the colour mounted in her cheek ; but ere the earl's sentence was concluded, Lord Walton and his fair companion re-entered the hall ; and she turned towards them without reply. Her lover gently detained her, however, gazing into her face half-reproachfully ; and she murmured in a low tone,—

“ I am always ready to fulfil my promises.”

“ Thanks, dear one, thanks,” answered the earl ; and turning to Lady Margaret, he released her hand, seeing that her brother beckoned her towards him.

“ You know all she tells me, Annie,” said Charles Walton, as his sister joined him and Arrah at the other side of the room ; “ but this must be kept secret for the present. We must have the further proofs ere we say aught to any one.”

“ Even to my aunt ?” asked his sister.

“ Ay, to her more than all,” answered Lord Walton ; “ but I will soon find means to clear up the whole. This man, O'Donnell, must be



seen if possible—but here comes a message from his majesty. I trust we shall soon be in Hull, and then we shall have ample means of obtaining all the information that may be required.”

The royal officer, as Lord Walton expected, brought him and the Earl of Beverley a summons to the presence of the king, to whom their arrival in the town had been immediately notified; and hastening to the house, they found the unhappy monarch surrounded by the nobility, who were now crowding to his standard. The scene was very different now from that presented by the court at Nottingham. Hope and expectation were in all faces; and even the melancholy countenance of Charles bore the look of satisfaction it so seldom assumed.

Commissioned by Lady Margaret Langley, the first act of Lord Walton was to present to his sovereign all the plate and jewels which had been brought from Langley Hall, an act which was imitated during the civil war by

many of the noble families of the day ; for loyalty was then a sentiment amongst a great number of the British nation, and attachment to the throne was not a matter of trade and calculation.

“My aunt commissions me to say, sire,” the young nobleman continued, “that did her strength or her sex permit, no one would fight more zealously than herself in defence of your throne ; but as she can bring you nought else, she brings you this small offering of good will, to the value, she esteems it, of about ten thousand pounds, which will at least aid in the maintenance of your troops.”

“I accept it as a loan, my lord,” replied Charles, “which would be soon repaid if many more of my subjects would show such devoted loyalty. However, as a loan, or as a gift, it commands my sincere gratitude ; and if God should bless my cause, as I trust He will, this is one of the acts that will not be forgotten.”

The monarch then turned to other subjects, and with graceful courtesy inquired into the

destruction of Langley Hall, and expressed his deep regret, that, for attachment to his cause, a lady so far advanced in life as Lady Margaret should have been exposed to such inconvenience, alarm, and danger."

The audience of the two noblemen was long; and to Lord Beverley, in particular, the king addressed numerous questions, making him repeat over and over again the substance of his conversations with Sir John Hotham, and pondering over his replies, as if seeking to confirm in his own breast the hopes he feared to entertain. At length, however, the monarch put the question plainly to the earl,—

"What is your own sincere opinion, my lord? Will Sir John keep his word?"

"If I must speak plainly, sire," replied the earl, "I can but reply that I think he will, if he can,—nay, I am sure of it. But I have some doubts 'as to his power of doing so;" and he proceeded to explain that an evident jealousy was entertained by the parliament of

the governor of Hull—that his own son was in fact merely a spy upon him in the place where he appeared to command—and that before his (Lord Beverley's) departure, he had heard of the arrival of several parliamentary officers, and that others were expected, whose presence in the town might act as a check upon Sir John Hotham, and prevent him from executing that which he intended.

Such a view of the case gave the king subject for further meditation; and at length he repeated twice,—

“It were much to be wished that we could find some means through a confidential person of holding communication with the governor.”

The Earl of Beverley was silent for a moment or two, for he had been dreaming happy dreams, and felt painfully reluctant to put their accomplishment to hazard by placing himself in peril of what seemed almost more terrible than death—a long and indefinite imprisonment. When the king repeated nearly the same words, however, and he felt that

their application was to himself, he bowed with a grave and resolute air, saying,—

“If your majesty thinks that my return to Hull can be for your service, I am ready to undertake it.”

“It will be greatly for my service, my noble friend,” replied Charles, “though it grieves me to place you in a situation of such danger, after all you have suffered in this cause.”

“Well, sire,” replied the earl with a sigh, “it will be better for me to set out immediately; for, in order to maintain the character I formerly assumed, I must come upon Hull from the other side, and it is already late. I fear, moreover, my communications with your majesty must be through York; so that a good deal of inevitable delay will take place.”

The further arrangements between the king and his loyal subject were soon made; and after spending one more brief hour with her he loved, Lord Beverley was again in the saddle, to execute the perilous commission he had undertaken.

In a brief conversation between himself and Lord Walton, the latter besought him to seek out the person named O'Donnell, and to gain from him every information he might possess regarding the early history of Arrah Neil. A note was added, in Lord Walton's own hand, begging the Irish merchant to confide fully in the bearer; and undertaking the commission willingly, the earl rode away towards the banks of the Humber.

## CHAPTER IX.

WHEN the Earl of Beverley had ridden on about five miles, musing over no very pleasant anticipations, he thought he heard the sound of a horse's feet, coming at full speed, and turned round to look. He himself was riding fast, but he now beheld a single horseman, spurring on still faster, and supposing that the personage who appeared might be some messenger sent after him, with farther directions from the king, he drew in his rein, and suffered him to ride up.

“Ha, Captain Barecolt!” he exclaimed, as soon as the other came near. “Is anything the matter—have you any message from his majesty?”

“None, my lord,” replied Barecolt; “but having heard of your expedition, with a hint that, as I had accompanied you before, I might do so again, I lost no time in following—but I was obliged to stop awhile, to change my dress, and put on Captain Jersval.”

“This is very rash!” said the earl, after a moment’s thought, “very rash indeed, my good friend. You have been seen by so many in your own character, that you have no chance of remaining undiscovered.”

“Nor your lordship either,” answered Barecolt.

“You do not understand the matter you speak of, sir,” replied the earl; “even if I am discovered, it may affect my personal safety, but not the king’s service; whereas, if you are recognised as one of his majesty’s officers, in my company, it may entirely frustrate the objects of my journey. You forget, sir, that the remains of Captain Batten’s troop are in Hull, and——”

“The remains of Captain Batten’s troop are



at Boston, my lord," answered Barecolt. "So much have I learned in Beverley. Sir John Hotham would not receive them, saying that he had no need of cavalry, and that, threatened as he was with siege, they would but eat up his provisions. I know my phiz is a remarkable phiz; but you forget, that the beauty thereof has been spoiled by this accursed cut over the nose; and besides, the very object of my going is to make a formal complaint to Sir John Hotham, of the conduct of Captain Batten, in attacking me and my friends—amongst whom I shall take care not to specify your lordship—and against one Cornet Stumpborough, for stopping me. Do not fear, my lord, but that I will extricate myself—and if you have any qualms about taking me with you, why, I can easily go in at another gate, and be ready to help you at any moment."

"Well, we will see," answered Lord Beverley; "we will see. I will think over it by the way;" and, entering into conversation with

his companion, he rode on. The various subjects discussed between the noble earl and our renowned friend, perhaps, might not be very interesting to the reader; for, although the dauntless captain at various times approached the subject of those wonderful and surpassing exploits which he had performed during preceding periods of his history, and the recital of which could not fail to excite the admiration and attention of any one possessing common powers of imagination; yet his cruel companion harshly checked him in all such digressions, and forced him to confine his narrative to the precise sorts and kinds of information which he himself desired to obtain. Thus we shall pass over all that took place till the two gentlemen approached within about a mile and a half of the town of Hull, when they perceived a small body of cavalry, apparently reconnoitring the place.

“Let us spur on as fast as possible, my lord,” said Captain Barecolt, as soon as he perceived this little force.

But the earl, who had, by this time, determined that it might be as well that the worthy captain should enter the town with him, though apparently only as a chance companion of the way; and who, moreover, judged at once that the body which they saw was merely a party of the king's troops examining the fortifications of Hull, replied in a quiet tone, "There is no need for any such speed, my good sir. Those are friends."

"The more reason, my lord, why we should seem to think them enemies," replied Captain Barecolt, who never neglected any opportunity of a ruse.

"You are right, you are right, captain," replied the earl, "and are, indeed, a great master of stratagems."

Thus saying, he spurred his horse into a gallop, and at that pace pursued his way towards the gates. The natural propensity which every creature has to follow another who runs away from it, caused half a dozen of the cavaliers to gallop after the two apparent

fugitives; but the earl and his companion had a start of some distance, and when they arrived at the gates, were about two hundred yards before their pursuers. The whole of this proceeding was seen from the walls, upon which a considerable number of the citizens were assembled; and a few musket-shots were fired upon the party of cavaliers, as soon as the two gentlemen were under cover. The fire did not injure any one, indeed; but it had the effect of inducing the chasing party to halt, and retreat very speedily, and the gates being opened, the Earl of Beverley rode in, followed by Barecolt, with their horses panting from the quick pace at which they had come.

All these circumstances were sufficient indications of hostility towards the royalist party, to satisfy the officers of the train-bands at the gates; and with very slight inspection of their passes, the earl and his companion were suffered to ride on into the town; but separating from his noble companion at the corner of the first street, Captain Barecolt rode away to-

wards the Swan, with instructions from the earl to seek out Mr. O'Donnell, and to make arrangements with him for a meeting on the following day.

In the mean while, the earl rode on towards the house of the governor, and dismounting in the court, demanded with a foreign accent, as before, to speak with Sir John Hotham. The personage to whom he addressed himself was one of the serving-men of that day, known by the general term of blue-bottles, but unfortunately, as it turned out, he was attached to the person of Colonel Hotham, and carried the earl's message to him immediately, without any communication with the governor.

After Lord Beverley had been kept waiting about five minutes in a hall, while several persons passed to and fro, and examined him more curiously than was at all pleasant to him, the serving-man re-appeared, saying, "Be so good as to follow me, sir;" and led the young nobleman through several long passages, to a

small gloomy room on the ground floor, where he found Colonel Hotham standing by a table, with his brow heavy, and his eyes bent upon the door. He inclined his head slightly as the earl entered, and said, without asking him to be seated, "Be so good, sir, as to explain your business to me. Sir John Hotham, my father, is too ill to receive you; and I am entrusted with his functions during his indisposition."

"Your pardon, sir," replied the earl calmly, though the meeting was by no means satisfactory to him, and he remarked that the serving-man remained at the door, while the tramp of feet was heard in the passage beyond. "My business is with Sir John Hotham alone, and if he be ill, I must wait till he has recovered, for I can communicate with no one but himself."

"You refuse then?" rejoined Colonel Hotham, with a heavy frown and a sharp tone—"you refuse? If so, I shall know what to suppose."

“Really, sir, I know not what you may think fit to suppose,” answered Lord Beverley; “but very straightforwardly and simply I do refuse to communicate business concerning Sir John Hotham to any one but himself.”

“Then, sir, it is clear you came hither as a spy,” said Colonel Hotham, “and shall be dealt with as such.”

The Earl of Beverley smiled, and producing the pass he had received from the governor of Hull, put it in the hands of the parliamentary officer, saying, “That mistake is easily corrected. Here is my pass in due form, under your father’s hand and seal.”

Colonel Hotham gazed at it with an angry look; and at the same moment the door by which the young nobleman had been introduced opened, and a party of four or five of the train-bands entered, with a prisoner between the two foremost. Lord Beverley turned round at the noise of their feet, and, somewhat to his consternation, beheld in the captive no other than good Diggory Falgate.

Had it been Barecolt, he would have counted upon his wit and discretion, but the poor painter had displayed no traits, during the earl's short journey with him, which could at all re-assure him, and expected every moment to hear him claim his acquaintance. But Falgate showed better judgment than was expected ; and Colonel Hotham, after staring at the pass for a moment or two, with a good deal of heat but some indecision in his countenance, suddenly seemed to take his resolution, and tore the paper in pieces, saying,—

“This is all folly and nonsense. A pass under a feigned name is invalid.”

“Sir, you have committed an act of gross injustice !” exclaimed the earl indignantly ; “and some day, sooner than you think, you may have to answer for it.”

“Indeed !” cried the parliamentarian, with a sneer. “Well, sir, I shall be ready to answer for my acts when needful. See that you be prepared to answer for yours by to-morrow



morning. Let loose that fellow!" he continued, turning to the guard. "I can find nothing against him: he is a citizen it seems. And convey this worthy person to the strong room. Put a sentry over him; and send Captain Marden to me.—Take him away, take him away."

"And what are we to do with this un?" asked one of the soldiers.

"Let him loose, fool!" replied Colonel Hotham, waving his hand, and the earl was removed in custody of the party, giving a significant glance to Falgate as he passed. The painter returned it, but said nothing; and Lord Beverley was led along to a small close room, with one high, grated window, where the heavy iron-plated door was closed upon him, locked and barred.

The earl seated himself on the only stool, rested his elbow on the table, and his head upon his hand, while the struggle between strong resolution and painful anticipations went on in his mind for nearly half an hour.

His was a heart not easily daunted — well fitted by high principles, and a calm and equal temper, to endure the rougher and more painful things of life, and to encounter the perils and disasters of a troublous epoch, better than lighter and gayer characters and less thoughtful minds. Nevertheless, he could not but feel the bitter disappointment which but too frequently follows on the indulgence of bright and high hopes in this, our earthly career. He almost blamed himself for the joyful dreams which he had suffered to rest in his imagination, while standing with sweet Annie Walton at the window of the house in Beverley; and his thoughts ran back from those dear moments into earlier days, recalling every bright spot in the past; thinking of enjoyments gone and pleasures fled away, with a deep and sad consciousness of the transitory nature of every earthly good. Memory is the true “Old Mortality” of the heart—wandering sadly through the scenes of the past, and refreshing the tombstones of joys gone for ever.

As he thus sat, the light began to fade away, and night to fall over the earth; but ere it was quite dark he heard footsteps without, and a voice speaking low to the guard at his door. The conversation ceased, but there was no noise of receding steps, and the earl thought, "They are watching how I bear it. They shall know nothing from that. I will sing;" and, folding his arms upon his chest, he raised his eyes to the faint spot of light that still appeared through the high window, and sang, to a plaintive air of the time, some lines composed towards the end of the preceding reign, perhaps by some victim to the coarse tyranny of James I.

Life's brighter part has passed away;

The dark remains behind:

The autumn brown rests on the earth;

Loud howls the wintry wind.

But steadfast hope and faith sincere

Shall still afford their light;

While these remain, this mortal gloom

Cannot be wholly night.

The summer flowers that once were here  
Have faded from the eye ;  
The merle has ceased to cheer the shade,  
The lark to wake the sky.

Green leaves have fallen from the trees,  
Dark clouds are overhead,  
And withered things, beneath my feet,  
Rustle where'er I tread.

But yet I know there is a land,  
Where all that 's lost on earth  
Revives to blossom and to bloom  
With undecaying birth.

Thus steadfast hope and faith sincere  
Shall still afford me light,  
Till other suns shall dissipate  
The gloom of mortal night.

## CHAPTER X.

WHILE such misadventures had been the lot of the Earl of Beverley, Captain Barecolt had ridden on unopposed and peaceably to the little inn called the Swan. He was in some apprehension, indeed, lest he should encounter worthy Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, at the house of good Mrs. White ; but he held a mind prepared to meet any emergency, and therefore would not be turned from his course by the fear of “any Dry that ever yet was born.” Alighting, then, at the door, he threw the rein of his horse over a hook provided for that especial purpose, and then, mounting the steps, looked in through the panes of glass in the door, which, to say the truth, afforded him no very clear insight into the passage

beyond, as each separate square, being blown in a somewhat rude fashion, was furnished with a thick green knot or bump in the centre, which greatly impeded the view. All seemed clear, however, and marvellously silent ; and, after having carried his inspection as far as he judged necessary, the renowned captain opened the door, and walked in. As soon as he did so, he perceived the good landlady seated in her little glass-case, alone, and busily engaged in hemming a wimple for her own proper person. She raised her eyes, as usual, at the sound of the opening door, and her face lighted up at the sight of the long limbs that presented themselves, in a manner which showed the illustrious commander that no danger was to be apprehended. Approaching, then, with a gallant air, Captain Barecolt unceremoniously entered the parlour, and saluted the fair hostess, who expressed herself right glad to see him, asking him a thousand questions about "the dear young lady, and her adventures on the road."

“All in good time, Mrs. White—all in good time,” answered Captain Barecolt. “To-night, God willing, I will give you a true and particular account of all that has happened since last we met; but now I have other things to think of. In the first place, my mouth is as dry as a sick dog’s nose, and I would fain have a choppin of something to moisten it.”

“That you shall, captain, in a minute,” replied the landlady. “You look dusty and tired, as if you had ridden hard.”

“And so I am, sweet hostess,” answered Barecolt; “and the dust is not more on my garments than between my teeth. My tongue is as parched as a bowl of split peas. Do you not hear it rattle? But do not go yourself for the wine, Mrs. White. Transfer that function to one of your nymphs, and listen to me.”

“La, captain, I have no nymphs,” answered the landlady, half offended; but her hero waved his hand, saying,—

“Well, your maidens then, Mrs. White. Call Sally, and then answer me two or three

questions ; but first send some one to stable my horse, which is at the door, and being a modest beast, may as well be removed from the lewd gaze of the townsfolk."

All was performed according to his command ; and when Mrs. White returned, Captain Barecolt proceeded, after a deep draught, without libation, to put his questions.

"First and foremost, Mrs. White," he said, "what of old Dry?"

"Lord, sir ! he is up stairs, sick in bed !" replied Mrs. White.

"There let him lie, and be the bed on him, white-livered renegade !" said Captain Barecolt. "Then he did not discover that you had aided and abetted in the escape of our fair demoiselle?"

"Oh, not a whit !" replied the landlady.— "He was in a mighty rage, to be sure, at first ; and he had search made, and a great fuss ; but it all ended in nothing ; and I managed slyly, pretending to help with all my might ; so that he grew quite fond and familiar—the nasty



old worm. Howsomever, he went out of the gates one day, leaving all his things here; and what happened I don't know; but he came back the next morning as dull and as dirty looking as a mixen, and took to his bed directly, and has had a doctor at him ever since. I think something must have frightened him sadly, for he has been whining and praying ever since; and the doctor said he had had a turn; but he is much better to-day."

"So far so well, Mrs. White," said Barecolt; "but we must now look to other matters. Do you know aught about Mr. O'Donnell?—for, if possible, I must see him to-night."

"I should think you would find him, sir," answered the hostess; "for he keeps himself a great deal at home just now. These are sad times in Hull, sir. There is great suspicion about; and every one whom they fancy to be what they call a malignant is pointed at, and watched night and day; and even a poor widow woman like me, they cannot help look-

ing after, as if I were a regiment of soldiers ; so that customers are afraid to come."

"Well, what of O'Donnell, what of O'Donnell?" demanded Captain Barecolt. "What has this to do with him, my good hostess?"

"Why, bless you, captain ! don't you know that people say he is a papist?" exclaimed Mrs. White ; "and so they are likely to be more sharp upon him than any one else—that is to say, not the governor, who is very fond of him people say, because he supplies him with Dantzic and other strong waters better than he can get at home ; but since Sir John has been ill of the gout, the colonel, his son, rules everything here in Hull ; and a hard rule is his for every one but roundheads. They may do as they like ; some men may lie in bed and sleep, whilst others must get up early in the morning."

All this was news to Captain Barecolt, and news of a very unpleasant character, which made him ponder deeply for several minutes. Being of an active and inquiring turn of mind,

he had not left his leisure time unemployed since he quitted Hull ; and partly by no very definite hints, sewn together by surmises, and partly by open avowals and accidental conversations, he had been led to the conclusion that some very intimate communication had been opened between Sir John Hotham and the Earl of Beverley, which the illness of the former, and the new state of things in the town, might sadly derange. He longed eagerly to gain some intelligence of the proceedings of his noble fellow-traveller ; and though he had a sufficient portion of the free companion in his character to act upon his own judgment, with very little deference for the commands he received, when it suited his own purpose, yet he had also sufficient of the old soldier in him to obey orders punctually when he could do no better. He therefore resolved to set out for O'Donnell's house at once, though he could not bring his mind to do so without draining another can ; and while the worthy landlady went to draw it

with her own fair hands, he sat pondering over what was to be done next, with no inconsiderable misgivings in regard to the termination of their expedition. At one time, indeed, he thought of cutting the whole matter very short, walking to the governor's house, demanding to see Colonel Hotham, running him through the body with his toledo, and, with the assistance of the more loyal inhabitants, taking possession of the town in the king's name. It seemed to the eyes of imagination an exploit worthy of a Barecolt; but reflection suggested to him various little objections, which made him abandon his scheme, though he did it with reluctance. The vision of becoming governor of Hull—a post which the king, he thought, could never refuse to grant him, if he took the city with his own right hand—was just fading away from his mind, when the outer door of the inn was thrown vehemently open, and some one entered the passage with a quick and agitated step. Captain Barecolt looked up, and gazed

forth from Mrs. White's glass-case, at the same time laying his hand upon his sword, for he was full of desperate and sanguinary thoughts. In a moment, however, his countenance lighted up, and exclaiming, "Ah, Diggory Falgate! honest Diggory Falgate! Something may perhaps be done now. His knowledge of the place and the people may aid us at this pinch; and my hand shall execute what his information suggests;" he opened the door, and went out to meet the poor painter, extending his hand to him in friendly guise.

Diggory Falgate started back, as if he had seen an apparition; but the next moment he grasped Barecolt's hand, and exclaimed,—

"This is lucky, indeed! Who would have thought to see you here, captain? But listen to me. I have got a story to tell you that will make your hairs stand on end. Two, indeed; but one first, for that presses, and if something is not done immediately, the earl is a dead man!"

“What earl?” demanded Barecolt, in horror and consternation.

“Why, our earl, to be sure!” replied Falgate, walking on into Mrs. White’s sanctum sanctorum. “The Earl of Beverley, no other ; and that Saracen of a colonel will have him shot to-morrow morning, as sure as I’m a living man, if something is not done to-night to prevent it !”

“I’ll cut his throat first!” exclaimed Barecolt, half drawing his sword. “But he dare not,—he dare not, Master Falgate.—’T is all nonsense.”

“He shot two men yesterday morning, by the water-side,” replied Falgate. “Didn’t he, Mrs. White?”

The latter words were addressed to the worthy landlady, just as she returned with a fresh choppin ; and while Captain Barecolt drained it down at one single indignant draught, she confirmed the poor painter’s account, saying,—

“Ay, that he did, the blood-thirsty brute ! and better men than himself, too.”

“What’s to be done now?” asked Barecolt. “The only way will be, to go and put him to death at once.”

“You will only get yourself killed, and do no good,” exclaimed the painter and landlady together; and then Falgate, proceeding alone, went on to add, “There is but one way to help the noble lord, captain, if we can but arrive at it, and that is, to get some one to tell Sir John Hotham himself. He’d never suffer all this to go on, if he knew it; and it is only since he fell ill the day before yesterday morning, that his son has dared to go on so.”

“I’ll write him a note,” said Barecolt.

“Phoo! that will never do,” replied the painter, “unless you can get some one to deliver it to Sir John himself.”

“I am talking without guide, indeed,” said the gallant captain, who began to feel that his nonsense was a little too gross even for the intellects of the landlady and the painter. “I do not yet know the whole circumstances. Pray, Master Falgate, have the goodness to

relate all you know, and how you know it; and then I will decide upon my plan from the intelligence I receive. Be so good as to avoid superfluous particulars, and yet be sufficiently minute in your details to afford me a distinct knowledge of the facts."

And assuming a grave and sententious look of wisdom, he sat with his hands folded upon his knees, while Diggory Falgate went on to inform his auditors, that he had been arrested while entering the town three days before, and placed in the custody of a body of the train-bands, with some of whom he was personally acquainted and on very friendly terms. He had remained in terror of his life, under their guard till that evening, receiving accounts from time to time of the wrath and fury which Colonel Hotham was exercising upon the unfortunate cavaliers of the place, and employing all the interest he could make to obtain his own liberation. That afternoon he had been brought in, he said, not knowing whether the next word was to be life or death,



when, to his surprise and grief, he beheld the earl in the presence of the governor's son. He then related all the particulars which he had witnessed, and a new consultation took place, which bade fair to have no end, when suddenly the worthy hostess exclaimed,—

“Mr. O'Donnell's the man. He can do it. He can do it, I tell you, when no one else can.”

“Do what?” exclaimed Captain Barecolt.

“Prithee, my excellent lady, what can he do?”

“Why, get in to speak with Sir John Hotham,” rejoined the worthy landlady, “and tell him all about it.”

“Then, as I said before,” exclaimed the renowned captain, “I will go to him this minute. Come along, Falgate, you shall go with me; for there's no time to be lost.”

“That there isn't,” replied Diggory Falgate.

“I'm your man, captain.”

And away they went, begging Mrs. White not to go to bed till they returned.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was nearly dark when the renowned Captain Barecolt and Diggory Falgate issued forth into the streets of Hull, and silence and well-nigh solitude had fallen over the town, for the people of that good city were ever particularly attentive to the hour of supper, which was now approaching; Captain Barecolt then ventured to give his companion a familiar and patronizing slap on the shoulder, saying,—

“Ah, Diggory Falgate! honest Diggory Falgate! I never thought to see thee again in the land of the living.”

“I certainly thought,” replied the painter, in a grave tone, “that I was on the high road to the land of the dead. But it was not

fair of you, captain, upon my life, to leave me outside, in the hands of those men. Why, they talked of hanging me without benefit of clergy."

"Fair!" cried Barecolt, indignantly. "How could I help it, Diggory? Did I not work more wonders than a man to save all of the party? Did I not kill six roundheads with my own hand? Did I not swim the moat, open the gates, fight in the front, protect the rear, kill the captain, disperse the troopers, and effect the retreat of my party with the loss of none but you, my poor old Diggory? What could man do more? You were but as a cannon, a falconet, a saker, which we were obliged to leave in the hands of the enemy; nor was it discovered for some time that you were not with us. When it was discovered, too, what did I do? Did I not issue forth, and, thinking that you might be lying covered with honourable wounds in some foul ditch by the road side, did I not search for you for miles around the field of battle?"

“No! did you, though?” said Diggory Falgate. “Well, that was kind, captain.”

“Nay, did I not pursue the search till after midnight?” continued Barecolt. “Ask Lord Walton: ask the noble earl. But now that I have found you, worthy Diggory, I would fain hear how you contrived to escape from the hands of the Philistines. You are not exactly a Samson, Diggory, and I should have thought they would have bound you with bands you could not break.”

“Hush!” said the painter; “here is some one coming.”

The person who approached was merely a labouring man, who had been detained somewhat late at his work, and he passed on without speaking; but the pause thus obtained in the conversation between Captain Barecolt and Diggory Falgate, afforded the latter time for a little reflection. It had been his purpose to communicate to his companion the whole of his adventures, and what he had discovered in the church on the hill; but as he pondered

on the matter, this design was altered. A conviction had gradually impressed itself upon his mind since first he had become acquainted with the grandiloquent Captain Barecolt, that the great warrior was in the habit of attributing to himself the actions and discoveries of others, or, at all events, of taking more than his due share of credit for anything in which he had part; and as Falgate seldom had had an opportunity of distinguishing himself in any way, except by painting strange faces, coats of arms, or wonderful beasts upon sign-boards, he wisely judged that it would be expedient not to let slip any part of the occasion which, as he thought, now presented itself.

When Captain Barecolt, therefore, returned to the charge, and required a detail of all his adventures, Falgate gave him such an account as was perfectly satisfactory to his interrogator, and which, moreover, had the advantage of being true; though that very important item in the Old Bailey oath, "the whole truth," was not exactly stated. He related how he

had been carried off by the roundhead party, how he had been questioned touching the gentleman with whom he had been lately consorting, how he had refused stoutly to answer, and had been threatened with death; how he had been shut up in the old church, and left there under a guard.

There, however, the minute exactitude of the painter's statement halted, and he merely added, that finding the door leading from the church into the vaults open, he had escaped by that means of exit, and, after hiding for some time in the neighbourhood, had heard that the troop which had taken him had been sent to Boston, upon which he ventured to return to Hull.

For his faithful discretion, Captain Barecolt bestowed upon him high commendation, declared that same day he would be a great man, if he would but learn to ride, and offered to be himself his instructor in that elegant art. By the time that the praises of the worthy officer came to an end, however, they were

approaching the out-of-the-way spot at which the dwelling of Mr. O'Donnell was situated ; but, in attempting to approach the water side, they were turned back by a sentinel, who, on being asked how they were to get to the house they wanted to visit, replied, they must go to the back-door, if it had one.

Luckily, Diggory Falgate was acquainted with the street in which that back door was situated, and to it they accordingly went, pulled the ring of a bell, and produced the slow appearance of the tidy old woman whom Barecolt had seen before. In reply to his inquiries for Mr. O'Donnell, however, on this occasion, she asserted boldly that he was out ; but the worthy captain, whose senses, as the reader knows, were generally on the alert, finished the sentence for her, by saying,—

“ Out of tobacco, do you mean, madam ? Good faith ! if he smokes away at the rate he is now doing in the parlour, he may well consume a quintal in a short space. Go in, my good lady, and tell him that a gentleman is

here who bears him news of old Sergeant Neil's grand-daughter."

The poor woman was confounded at the worthy captain's quickness, and too well accustomed to the vapour of tobacco to smell it herself, could not divine how the visitor had discovered that her master was smoking in the parlour, unless he had looked through a crack in the window. Without more ado, then, she retreated, leaving the strangers in possession of the passage; and in a moment after Mr. O'Donnell's head was thrust out of a door at the farther end, taking a view of his two visitors.

"Oh, come in, come in," he said at length, as he recognised Barecolt. "Who have you got there with you? Come in—Ah, painter, is that you?"

Without replying to his various questions, Barecolt and Falgate walked on into his little room, which they found cloudy with smoke, while a huge jug, emitting the steam of hot water, kept company with a large black bottle,



with the cork half out, which apparently contained a stronger fluid. O'Donnell shut the door carefully, and then at once began to interrogate Barecolt in regard to Arrah Neil; asking how she had fared on the journey, whether she had found Lord Walton and his sister, and where she actually was.

During the progress of these questions, which were put with great rapidity, Falgate sat silent, but noted attentively every word that was said, and marked the name of Lord Walton particularly in his memory, as apparently the chief friend of the young lady at whose escape he had assisted.

"She got off well, though it was through a hailstorm of dangers, Master O'Donnell," replied Barecolt, in a quick, hurried tone. "She has rejoined Lord Walton and his sister, and she is now in Beverley. Ask no more questions at present; but listen, and you shall have further information concerning poor Arrah to-morrow, God willing. At present

we have other things to think of—business of life and death, Master O'Donnell."

"Ah, devil fly away with it!" cried the Irishman. "That is always the way. Nothing but business of life and death nowadays! A plain man can't drive a plain trade quietly, without being teased about business of life and death. But I will have nothing to do with it, I tell you! I am a peaceable, well-disposed man, who hate secrets, and abominate business of life and death. There, take some Geneva and water, if you will. It is better than all the business in the world. Run and get some drinking cups, master painter."

Falgate, who seemed to have been in the house before, did as he was directed; and as soon as his back was turned, O'Donnell demanded,—

"What is this business? One cannot speak before your companion. He is a rattled, silly fellow."

"But a very faithful one," answered Barecolt, doing the poor painter justice; "and this

affair he knows all about already. But the matter is shortly this, my good friend, a noble gentleman is here in Hull, having business with Sir John Hotham, and charged, moreover, by Lord Walton, to speak with you concerning Mistress Arrah Neil. He is my particular friend; and while he went on to the governor's house, I went to the Swan, requested by him to see you, and fix a meeting for to-morrow morning. However, when he arrives at Sir John Hotham's, he finds no one but his son—Sir John being very ill——”

“Ah, by ——, here's a pretty affair!” cried O'Donnell. “Very ill, Sir John is not. He has got the gout in one foot and both hands, and is as cross as the yards of a ship; but his son takes all upon himself, and a base business he makes of it. What more? what more?”

“Why, the son causes this noble gentleman to be arrested immediately for a spy, tears his pass to pieces, will not let him see the

governor, and threatens to shoot [him to-morrow morning.”

“And so he will to be sure!” cried O’Donnell. “But what’s to be done? How, in the fiend’s name, can I help you?—I’ll not meddle with it!—Not a whit! I shall get shot some day myself, if I don’t mind.”

As he was speaking, Diggory Falgate returned with two drinking cups; and without waiting for Barecolt’s reply, he tapped O’Donnell on the shoulder, saying,—

“I’ll tell you how you can help us, Master O’Donnell. Nothing so easy in life, and no danger to yourself either, though you are not a fellow to fear that, if there were. All that is wanted is to let the governor know what is going on, and he’ll soon stop the colonel’s doings; for the pass was in his own hand which that wild beast tore; and it will be an eternal blot upon his honour—worse than a black bend sinister on the shield of his arms—if any harm happens to the earl after giving him that.”

"The earl!" said O'Donnell. "Oh, ho! He is an earl, is he?"

"What have you said, you fool?" cried Barecolt, turning angrily upon Falgate; but the painter, though he turned somewhat red, put the best face he could upon it, saying,—

"Well, it's a slip of the tongue, captain; but it can't be helped—and you know you can trust him."

"Ay, ay! trust me, sure enough," answered the Irishman. "But how am I to do anything in this?" and leaning his head upon his hand, he mused, while Barecolt mixed himself some Geneva and hot water, not particularly potent of the latter; and Falgate stood gazing at the master of the house, as if waiting for him to speak further.

"I'll tell you what you can do, Master O'Donnell," said the painter at length, laying his hand upon the other's arm; "you can put on your hat and cloak, and go down to Sir John Hotham, and ask to speak with him for a moment about his gout. We know

he will see you, for Mrs. White told us all about it."

"And if you have a snug little bottle of cordial waters under your arm, you are sure to get in," added Barecolt. "Come, come, Master O'Donnell, do not hesitate. There is no time to be lost."

"On my life, that's a pretty joke!" cried O'Donnell, starting up, "that I am to go and put my neck in peril for a man I never saw in my life. I tell you, I'll have nothing to do with it. It's a bad case; and if they shoot him, they must."

In vain, to all appearance, were the eloquence of Barecolt, and the arguments of the painter. The best they could obtain from O'Donnell was a vague and unsatisfactory reply that he would go on the morrow—or that he would see about it. He asked, nevertheless, a number of questions, as if he felt some interest in the affair, which, for near half an hour had the effect of inducing his two visitors to believe that their entreaties would ultimately prove

effectual; but at length he suddenly turned the conversation to another subject, and once more inquired of Arrah Neil; and Barecolt, rising, wished him good-night in a sullen and disappointed tone, saying, that, as he would have no hand in it, some one else must be found who would undertake the task which he declined.

As soon as the mighty captain issued forth into the street, however, he burst into a laugh, much to Falgate's surprise. But Barecolt laughed again, saying, "He will do it, Master Falgate! He will do it, take my word for it. He is a cunning old chap, that Master O'Donnell, and he will not let us know what he is going to do; but he'll go."

"I don't think it, Captain Barecolt, I don't think it," replied Falgate, sadly; "and we cannot trust the good earl's safety to such a chance."

"I don't intend to trust to any chance at all, Diggory Falgate," answered Barecolt, in one of his supreme tones. "You do not sup-

pose an officer of my experience will rest satisfied without clear knowledge of what he is about? Draw back with me, Master Falgate. Go you under the shadow of that entry, where you can see his door in front. I will post myself by that penthouse, where I command both streets. He cannot escape us then, and we will give him twenty minutes. But if he comes forth, say not a word, move not a finger; rest as quiet as one of the door nails till he has gone on, and then come and join me."

Not five of the twenty minutes which Captain Barecolt had allowed for the issuing forth of Mr. O'Donnell had elapsed, when the door of his house opened, and a tall figure appeared, which, turning back its head, said aloud, "Turn the lock, Dorothy," and then took its way up the street, without observing either of the two watchers.

Diggory Falgate was soon by Barecolt's side, and they followed together upon the steps of the worthy Irishman, till they saw him ap-



proach the governor's house, and enter the court; after which they again ensconced themselves under a gateway, in order to obtain the means of judging, by the duration of O'Donnell's stay, whether he was admitted to the presence of Sir John Hotham or not. Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour passed, and O'Donnell not having appeared when the clock struck ten, Barecolt and his companion, satisfied that their end was so far accomplished, made the best of their way back to the sign of the Swan. The cautious captain, however, to make assurance doubly sure, directed Falgate to proceed, at break of day, once more to the merchant's house, and to question him closely in regard to the result of his visit. After which, having communicated to Mrs. White what success they had achieved, and received her opinion that Master O'Donnell would leave no stone unturned to effect their object, they sat down to a good supper which she had prepared for them in the room where Mr. Dry had dined with Arrah

Neil, and enjoyed themselves for half an hour.

At the end of that time, Falgate, pronouncing himself tired, left Captain Barecolt with the flagon (which he did not propose to quit for another hour), and retired, taking care to close the door after him. His course, however, did not lie straight to bed; for finding the worthy landlady locking up her spoons and ladles in her little parlour, he joined her there, and entered into conversation with her in a low and confidential tone. Their conference lasted near half an hour, carried on apparently with some reluctance by Mrs. White at first, but gradually becoming animated on her part also, and at length, when Falgate asked her, "You are quite sure she was buried there, and that what I tell you was on her coffin?"

"I'll take my oath of it," she replied; "I'll give it under my hand if you like."

"I wish you would, Mrs. White," answered the painter; and receiving her promise that it

should be done on the following day, he retired to bed.

Before we close this somewhat long chapter, it may be necessary to trace to a certain point the proceedings of our worthy friend, O'Donnell; but we will do so very briefly. Having passed the sentinel in the court of the governor's house, he approached a small door at the side, and knocked for admission. A servant appeared almost immediately, but far from asking directly to speak with Sir John Hotham, he said, "Ah, Master Wilson, is Oliver within? I want a chat with him." "Walk in, Master O'Donnell," replied the man, "and I will seek for him. He was with Sir John a moment ago."

O'Donnell wasted no more words, but entered in silence, and after having been kept for a minute or two in the dark passage, he was joined by Oliver, the governor's body servant, as he was called, with a light. The two shook hands with great good-will, and Master Oliver drew his Irish friend into a

little room on the left, where immediately O'Donnell produced two large flat-sided, long-necked bottles from under his cloak, and setting one down on the table, he said, "That's for you, Noll; and this is some gout-cordial for the governor, which will soon send all his ailments away."

"God grant it!" replied the man; "for he is in a devil of a humour. Shall I take it to him, Master O'Donnell? Many thanks for the good stuff."

"Welcome, welcome!" replied his companion; "but you must get me speech of Sir John this very night; for I have got a dozen bottles of cinnamon, such as you never tasted in your days, and a gentleman in the town wants them. So I promised to give him an answer before I went to bed; but thought it only dutiful to talk to the governor about them first, in case he should like any."

"Ah, he'll talk about that," replied the servant, "though he won't talk of anything else. Come up with me to his door, and we'll

soon see if he'll speak with you. Bring your bottle with you. That's as good as a pass."

"Better sometimes," replied O'Donnell, drily; and following the servant up stairs and into the better part of the house, he was kept for a moment or two in the corridor, and then admitted into the presence of Sir John Hotham.

## CHAPTER XII.

DAY dawned at length into the dark and lonely prison of the Earl of Beverley—the bright warm day, clear and beautiful, and rosy with the hue of the rising sun. A long ray of light streamed through the high window, and painted the opposite wall; then slowly descending, as the orb rose farther in the heaven, rested on the graceful figure and the rich curling hair of the captive, as he still sat at the table, but with his head now bent down on his folded arms fast asleep. The quiet sunshine did not wake him, for he had watched—with anxious thoughts for his only companions—through the greater part of the night; and not till about an hour before morning had

slumber fallen upon him. But he was not destined long to know repose ; for shortly after dawn a voice was heard in the room, saying, " Is there any one below ? "

The sound but not the sense caught his ear ; and starting up he gazed round the room. All was vacant, however, and he thought he had been dreaming, when suddenly the question was repeated,—

" Is there any one below ? "

It seemed to come from the chimney ; and approaching, he replied aloud,—

" Yes ! Who speaks ? "

" Who are you ?—what is your name ? " demanded the voice ; but, though the tones seemed not unfamiliar to Lord Beverley's ear, he could not of course venture to give his real name to a person he did not see ; and he replied,—

" That is nothing to any one. Who is he that talks to me ? "

" My name is Ashburnham," replied the person, who seemed speaking from some room

above; "a prisoner, like yourself, if you be one."

"I am, indeed, Ashburnham," answered the earl. "I will not utter my name, lest there should be other ears listening; but I am he whom you joined going to France, and who was taken with you."

"Bad luck, indeed!" cried Colonel Ashburnham. "Hotham has lied, then, for he told me you were gone."

"He spoke truth there," answered the earl; "but, as ill fortune would have it, I returned last night on business, and was arrested by his son, who tore my pass, and vows he will try me as a spy."

"Ay, a curse fall upon him," cried the other voice. "He respects no rules of honour or courtesy; and, since his father fell ill, has put me in close confinement. If Hotham could know, he would treat you better; but I cannot help you, for I am locked in here."

"Hush!" cried the earl; "here are steps coming."



The next moment the key was turned in the lock, the bar taken down, and two soldiers appeared. In a dull and indifferent tone, as if he were bidding the prisoner come to the morning meal, one of the men told Lord Beverley to follow him to the colonel's council; and obeying, with very little hope that anything he could say would change the stern purpose of the parliamentary officer, the earl was led along the passage to what seemed a dining-hall on the same floor, in which he found Colonel Hotham seated at a table, with four inferior officers round him. Two wore the garb of the train-bands, the others seemed strangers to the city; for when the prisoners entered they were asking some questions concerning the fortifications. His appearance, however, instantly drew their eyes upon himself; and walking with a firm step to the end of the table he gazed calmly over them, scanning the countenance of each of those who seemed assembled to judge him, not at all abashed by the dark and somewhat fierce stare

with which one or two of them regarded him.

Colonel Hotham had in general chosen his men well. The two Londoners he had long known as very unscrupulous and fiery zealots in the cause of the parliament ; and Captain Marden, one of the officers of the train-bands, whom he had called to his aid, had made himself somewhat remarkable on several occasions by his gloomy fierceness of disposition. He had commanded the party by whom the two unfortunate men mentioned by Falgate had been put to death ; and he had seemed only the more morose and dogged after the horrid scene in which he had borne a part. The fourth officer was known as a religious enthusiast, a preacher in one of the conventicles of the city ; and, as was generally supposed, as wild and unsparing as the rest, so that Colonel Hotham entertained no doubt that his purposes towards the prisoner would receive the sanction of these men's authority, without scruple or hesitation on their part.

After pausing for a moment, while the earl stood at the end of the table as we have described, the parliamentary commander demanded, in a sharp tone,—

“What is your name?”

“Not knowing that you have any authority to ask it,” replied the earl, with perfect calmness, “I shall, most undoubtedly, refuse to answer.”

“That will serve you little, sir,” said one of the men from London; “for if you do refuse, the court will proceed to try you without farther ceremony.”

“What court?” demanded the earl. “I see five persons sitting round a table, but no court.”

“This, sir, is summary court-martial,” replied Colonel Hotham, “called to try a person accused of entering a garrisoned town as a spy.”

“With a pass from the governor?” added Lord Beverley, emphatically.

“But that pass, we have every reason to

believe," replied Colonel Hotham, "was obtained by a false representation of your name and quality, and as such was invalid."

"That point will be easily established," replied the earl, "by calling the governor himself. I maintain that he gave it to me with full knowledge of my person; and I, therefore, require that he be called, to testify as to the validity of the pass which you, sir, most dishonourably and dishonestly tore to pieces last night."

"The governor is too ill, sir, to give his evidence," said one of the officers from London.

"If, gentlemen, your purpose is to commit a cool, deliberate murder," said the earl, "you may do it without all this ceremony. I am in your hands, have no power to resist you, and no means of obtaining justice; but I will not further your views by recognising this as a court, which is, in fact, none at all. If Sir John Hotham is too ill to attend, delay the inquiry till he is better. I stand upon the safe conduct which I received from him; and if

you violate it you are murderers and not men of honour."

"Had he a pass?" demanded the preacher officer of the train-bands, turning gloomily to Colonel Hotham.

"He had, but under a feigned name," replied Hotham.

"What proof have you?" demanded the enthusiast. "Remember, sir, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed!' If you bring not your father to testify, how can we know that this safe conduct was wrongly obtained?"

Colonel Hotham's cheek turned red, for he loved not such opposition; and he paused for a moment ere he replied, feeling that he was angry, and fearing that he might commit himself.

"I think," he answered at length, in a tone so soft that it betrayed the struggle to keep down his passion—"I think that we can prove that it was obtained under a false name by other witnesses, without disturbing my father,

which might be dangerous;" and then turning to the two guards, who remained at the door, he said, "Where is the other prisoner? Let him be brought in. Has the other man been summoned, who is said to know something of these persons?"

"Yes, colonel," replied the man to whom he spoke; "they are both without there, one in one room, and the other in another."

"Bring in the prisoner first," said Colonel Hotham; "we will confront them together, gentlemen."

A pause ensued for the space of about two minutes, during which no one spoke, except one of the officers of the train-bands, who said a few words to the other in a low voice, and then the door opened; and turning round his head, the earl, as he had apprehended, beheld the renowned Captain Barecolt marched in amongst some soldiers. As it was not the first time that the worthy officer had found himself in such an unpleasant position, he showed himself very little disturbed by his

situation, and walked up to the end of the table with a bold countenance, smoothing down his mustachios, and drawing his beard to a point between his fingers, as if he had not had time to complete his toilette ere he was brought from the inn.

The cool self-sufficiency of his air seemed to move the wrath of Colonel Hotham, who instantly addressed him, saying,—

“What is your name, fellow?”

“I be not your fellow, sair,” replied Barecolt, boldly, “and am not so call. My name were Captain Jersval, for your service, gentlemen.”

“And now speak out, and speak the truth,” continued the colonel, while Barecolt bowed ceremoniously round the table; “leave your mumming, sir, and answer. Who is this person, with whom you entered the town yesterday evening? Answer truly, for your life depends upon it.”

“Begar it were one very difficult thing for me to tell,” replied Barecolt in the same un-

concerned tone. "First, sair, it cannot alway be easy to tell who one be oneself; and much more uneasy to tell who de oder man be."

"What does the fool mean?" demanded one of the roundhead officers; "Not always easy to tell who you are yourself! What do you mean, man?"

"Why, sair," replied Barecolt, with an agreeable laugh, "one day not so very long time ago, I met wid one saucy man who to my face—to my very beard, sair—swear I was one oder man but myself. He swear I were not Jersval but Barecole—one Capitaine Barecole, a very great man in dese parts—a famous man, I hear."

"Cease this foolery, sir," cried Colonel Hotham; "and answer my question directly, or prepare to walk out to the water-gate, and receive a volley. Who is the person, I say, now standing beside you?"

"Pardi! how de devil should I know?" rejoined Barecolt, with some heat of manner; "I have seen him twice, dat is all; once



aboard de sheep where he was very seek, and once I meet him just half a league out of de gate. We were chase hard by a party of what you call cavalier malignant, and ride togeder for our lifes?"

"That is true, for I saw them," said one of the officers of the train-bands.

"And do you pretend to say you do not know his name?" demanded Colonel Hotham, gazing with the fierceness of disappointment upon the worthy captain's face.

"Oh, I think I heard his name on board de sheep," answered Barecolt; "but I cannot be too sure. Let me see. It was de Colonel de Mery: was it not, that you told me, sair?" and he turned to the earl with a low bow.

"I answer no questions here, sir," replied Lord Beverley. "This is no lawful court, and the people are not seeking justice, but a pretext for murder."

"Ah! murder—dat be very bad;" cried Captain Barecolt, with a shrug of his shoulders; "men may kill one de oder in fair fight very

well—but murder be very bad indeed! Perhaps day murder me too!”

“Very likely;” answered the earl, drily; but Colonel Hotham exclaimed, “Silence! I have given you an opportunity, sir, of saving your life, by telling plainly who this man is. You would not take it; and now we shall soon see who you are yourself. Bring in that Mr. Dry.”

Captain Barecolt’s countenance fell, for he had remarked the room-door of Mr. Dry open on the preceding night, as he walked somewhat late to bed; and though he had not been aware at the time that the worthy master of Longsoaken was awake and watching, he doubted not now that his own arrest was owing to that gentleman’s good offices. He prepared for the worst, however, and determined to adhere to his story stoutly, thanking his stars that he had alluded to his rencontre with Cornet Stumpborough, before Mr. Dry was called.

He was not kept long in suspense, however,

for not more than half a minute elapsed before Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, entered the room, with his face very pale, and his nose very blue, as if recovering from a severe illness, and taking his place at a convenient distance from the renowned captain, replied at once to Colonel Hotham's first question,—

“That, worshipful sir—that is one Captain Barecolt, a notorious malignant, now actually in arms against the authority of the two houses.”

“Oh, I tell you so !” cried Barecolt, with a well-feigned look of impatience ; “Captain Barecolt again ! Cuss Captain Barecole ! Now he swear me black in de face dat I were Capitaine Barecolt just as de oder did.”

“I will swear to be sure,” replied Mr. Dry ; “for as I have a conscience and a soul to be saved, you are the man. We all know you are very cunning, Captain Barecolt ; but if you can cheat in others, you cannot cheat in this matter. I know you well enough, after having been carried along as a captive in

bonds, by you and other Amorites like you, for several mortal days."

"What he mean by Amorite," asked Barecolt, with a look of ignorance; but Colonel Hotham interposed, saying,—

"That will do, sir; stand down! You shall hear more as soon as you could wish. Now, worshipful Master Dry, be so good as to look well at that other person, and say if you have seen him before."

Mr. Dry did as he was directed; but the appearance of the earl puzzled him more; for, though the beauty of his features were remarkable, yet even to those who had seen him often, the black dye with which he had tinged his hair and beard made so great a change, that it would have been difficult to recognise him.

"Yes," said the master of Longsoaken, at length—"yes, I am very sure I have seen him before, though I think his hair was of a different colour then. I met him as he was riding up to the house of the malignant Lord

Walton, at Bishop's Merton. He staid there all night, I heard, on the day when the house took fire. I am quite sure it is the same, though his hair is dyed."

"It is," replied Colonel Hotham, in a stern and determined tone; "and I will tell you who he is, gentlemen; for, though he thinks I do not know him, yet I do. I was a fool not to recognise him at first. This, sirs, is the noble Earl of Beverley, who has now come into this garrison of Hull as a spy, and deserves death by all the laws of war."

"It is false, sir," answered the earl, gazing on him fixedly. "Whoever I am, I came not here as a spy."

"Do you mean to deny your name, my lord?" demanded Colonel Hotham.

"I mean to answer no questions, sir," said the earl, "but merely to give you the lie in your teeth, when you assert a falsehood. I stand upon your father's safe-conduct, and call him to witness that he gave it to me."

"The pass I tore was not in favour of the

Earl of Beverley," replied the officer; "and that you are he will soon be proved, though I thought fit to call upon these men first. Ask Colonel Jackson to step hither," he continued, speaking to the guard, "and the two other gentlemen in the red room."

The name he mentioned was familiar to the ear of Lord Beverley, who remembered that Colonel Jackson was in the hall where he had had his first interview with Sir John Hotham, but owing to the disguise which he had assumed, had not recognised him on that occasion. He could little hope, however, that the parliamentary officer would fail to do so now, when his attention was particularly drawn to the examination; and the matter was but too soon decided. Three gentlemen were, one by one, introduced into the room, and told to examine the earl, and state who he was; and each, though with apparent reluctance, pronounced the words, "Lord Beverley."

"The case is clear, gentlemen," said Colonel Hotham. "The Earl of Beverley, under a

feigned name, and with an invalid pass, has introduced himself into this garrison. It is for you to say, whether, under these circumstances, he is, or is not a spy, and subject to the invariable law of such cases."

"Remembering always," rejoined the earl, "that you have no proof that the safe-conduct was invalid, Colonel Hotham having torn it, so that it has never been beneath your eyes; and not forgetting that, even supposing this to be a lawfully-constituted court-martial—which I deny, he having no authority to summon one—he has refused to call the only witness I judged necessary to my defence."

He spoke calmly and firmly, with his cheek perhaps a shade paler than it usually was, but with no other visible sign of emotion, while the countenance of Colonel Hotham, on whom his eyes were fixed, worked with many mingled passions which resisted control.

"This is all vain and foolish!" cried the latter; "I will tell the earl that I have authority which I should not scruple to exercise, to put

him to death at once, but that I have thought it better to give him the chance of this investigation."

"Young man," said the military preacher, addressing Hotham in a solemn tone, "if you give a man in bonds a chance, it should be a fair one. Such has not been afforded the prisoner.—Why did you tear the paper?—Why do you now refuse to confront him with the witness he calls?—and if that witness be too ill, why not wait till he be well, as he requires? Why not—if not to doom him to death at your pleasure?—I will go no farther in this—I wash my hands of this blood."

"Well, then, we will put it to the vote!" cried Colonel Hotham, fiercely, "and look to yourself, Captain Marsh. He that puts his hand to the plough, must not turn back.—Look to yourself, I say."

"I will," replied the old officer of the trainbands; "and I am not to be frightened from a righteous course by loud words or frowning brows. I fear not what man can do unto me."



“Pshaw!” cried Colonel Hotham, turning away. “Your verdict, sir, upon these two men—guilty, or not guilty?”

“Guilty,” said the Londoner to whom he spoke, without a moment’s pause.

“Guilty,” said the other, on the colonel’s left, answering a mere look.

“I doubt,” replied Captain Marden of the train-bands, when Hotham turned to him.

“But I do not,” rejoined that officer; “and I say guilty too—so there are three voices against two. They are condemned. Take them hence to the water-gate, call out a file of men, and the rest as yesterday. I spare you the rope, Lord Beverley, in consideration of your rank. You shall die as a soldier.”

“And you as a murderer!” shouted Barecolt, rushing towards him so suddenly, that he caught him by the throat with both hands, before any one could interpose.

The two parliamentary officers drew their swords; the guards were rushing up from the door; but, under the strong pressure of Cap-

tain Barecolt's fingers, Colonel Hotham was turning black in the face, and might have been strangled before he could be delivered; when suddenly a voice was heard, exclaiming, "Halt! Not a man stir! Guard the door!" and all was silence.

Captain Barecolt slightly relaxed his grasp; the parliamentary officers drew back; and Sir John Hotham, with an excited and angry countenance, and evidently in great pain, walked up the room, and took his place at the head of the table.

"What is all this?" he demanded, "Unloose my son, sir.—What is the meaning of this, Colonel Hotham?"

"*Pardi*, I will unloose him—now, you be come, governor," replied Barecolt, taking away his hands, and drawing back; "but, begar, if you had not come, he'd be strangle."

Colonel Hotham sank in a chair, gasping for breath, and one of the officers from London took upon him to reply. "This is a court-martial, Sir John, summoned to try——"

“And by whose authority?” demanded the governor fiercely; “who dares to summon a court-martial in Hull but myself?”

“But you were ill, sir,” replied the officer, “and Colonel Hotham judged it expedient to summon us.”

“He did! did he?” cried the governor. “Colonel Hotham, give up your sword.—You are under arrest. Remove him, guards. Take him away. This is no court—all its proceedings are illegal, and so shall be dealt with. Gentlemen, you are dismissed. Away! We have had too much of you.”

Some of those present were inclined to remonstrate—but the old man, who alone had interfered in behalf of the earl, said aloud, “You are quite right, Sir John. The court, and all its proceedings were illegal and iniquitous.”

Colonel Hotham, too, strove to make himself heard; but the governor exclaimed, in a loud and angry tone, “Away! Have I not said it? Guards, clear the room—and take

that young man away. Place a sentry at his chamber-door. He is under arrest."

Sir John Hotham had not come alone, for the further end of the hall displayed a considerable party of the train-bands; and muttering some very unpleasant observations on his father's conduct, Colonel Hotham was removed, while the rest of the body whom he had chosen to constitute a court-martial, retired slowly and sheepishly, leaving the governor with the two prisoners, Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, and a party of the guard.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SIR JOHN HOTHAM gazed alternately at Lord Beverley, Captain Barecolt, and Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, with not a little of that irascibility, which is common in the complaint from which he was suffering, still evident in his countenance, and ready to fall upon any one who said a word to provoke his wrath. As several of the guard were in the room, Lord Beverley thought it most prudent to remain perfectly silent; and the governor, at length, began the conversation, by exclaiming, "And who the devil is this fellow?" At the same time, he pointed to Mr. Dry, with no very placable looks.

"I am a poor, God-fearing man, worshipful

sir," began the personage of whom he spoke ; but Captain Barecolt interrupted him before he could say more,—

"He is vone of de greatest rogue in all de Christendom," he said, turning to the governor, "I know he very well. He sheat de king, he sheat de parliament, he sheat every body. He be vone grand imposture."

"The devil he is," exclaimed the governor, "Is this true, sir?" And he looked to Lord Beverley for an answer.

"Perfectly, Sir John," replied the earl, "I have heard a good deal of this gentleman from various quarters ; and I know that he carried off a young gentlewoman from her friends, and brought her hither to Hull, with very sinister views indeed."

Mr. Dry held up his hands, and showed the whites of his eyes ; but the governor exclaimed, "Ay, by ——," and he added a very unsanctified oath, "I recollect the scoundrel now. He came here two or three days ago—he came here, making a great noise about this

girl, and asking for warrants, and I know not what—he declared that she was his ward. Take him by the ears, fellows, and turn him out of the town. We want no such vagabonds amongst us.”

“I warn you, worshipful sir, I warn you,” cried Mr. Dry, while two of the guards took him by the arms, “that these are two malignants, and prelatie conspirators. Did not false witnesses rise up against ——”

“Away with him,” shouted Sir John Hotham, before he could finish the sentence, “away with him, and if he continues to bawl, put him in the stocks, and let him bawl there.”

The soldiers removed Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, without farther resistance; for he, like Erasmus, was not of the stuff from which they make martyrs, and the name of the stocks had a great effect upon him. The governor then directed the rest of the soldiers to quit the room, but to wait in the passage without, adding, “I will examine into the case of these gentlemen myself.”

As soon as the room was clear, he turned to the Earl of Beverley, saying, "This is an unfortunate affair, my lord. You see how things go. What can I do?"

"Why, methinks, Sir John," rejoined the earl, approaching the governor, and speaking in a whisper, "the only thing for you to do, is to throw open the gates at once to his majesty's forces, and declare your loyalty. A few hours would bring the army hither."

"Impossible! impossible!" cried Hotham aloud, with an impatient look. "You know not what you talk of, sir. Everything is changed since you were here. This place is full of people sent down from the parliament. It will be as much as I can do to get you safely out, and unless my son had given me cause to shut him up, I could not even do that. He cannot be kept in long, however, for, ere noon, I shall have remonstrances enow; and your only safety is in immediate departure. You shall have a new pass without delay, and



then the sooner your back is turned on Hull the better."

"But what shall I say to the king?" demanded the earl, willing to make one more effort for the grand object of his coming; "he fully expects——"

"Expects what cannot be done!" exclaimed the governor, impatiently. "Give my humble duty to his majesty, and say I will lose no opportunity to do him service; but that I am no longer master in Hull. Tell him he had better withdraw his troops as soon as may be, for, if they come before the walls, the cannon must be fired upon them, which I would fain avoid. But say, sir—say that my heart is with him, and that it is against my will I close the gates."

As he spoke, he drew the inkstand closer to him, and wrote a fresh pass for the earl, looking up, and adding, "But I will send people with you, to see you clear of the gates. On my life, I scarce know what contempt these men will show to my orders; and 't is

as likely as not, that they would stop you, and hang you in the streets, if you had not a guard."

"Begar! den de sooner we wish dem good morning de better," cried Captain Barecolt.

"But, Sir John, there is another matter," said Lord Beverley, as the governor put his signature to the paper. "You have here, in bonds, my friend, and the king's faithful servant, Colonel Ashburnham. I do beseech you, for my sake, and for your loyalty's sake, set him free also."

"Nay, I know not how that may be," replied Sir John Hotham, "the parliament have written to my son, I hear, to send him up to Westminster."

"But your son is not governor of Hull," answered the earl; "if the mandate came to him, not you, there can be no cause why you should know or recognise it. If you miss this opportunity of sending him away with us, you may regret it when you have no longer the power to show such an act of courtesy."

“True, true,” replied Sir John Hotham, “I have promised him his freedom, and he shall have it, if the devil himself keep the gates. Stay here a minute, stay here,” and rising from his chair, he limped away, and left Captain Barecolt and the earl alone in the hall.

A few minutes passed in explanations between the two cavaliers; but then they began to be somewhat impatient for the governor's return, as they were but too well aware that their situation was still full of danger and difficulty. Minute after minute passed, however, without his coming, and considerable degree of noise in the house, the moving about of many feet, and a good deal of bustle and confusion, did not tend to quiet their apprehensions.

“By heaven, my lord!” cried Barecolt, at length, “I fear your lordship has gone farther than that worthy gentleman of old times, who sacrificed himself for his friend, for I've a great notion that you have sacrificed me also,

for this good colonel, who was the original cause of all our mishap.—I would have let him take his chance, and get out as he could.”

But, while the renowned captain was thus remonstrating, the door again opened, and Sir John Hotham re-appeared, followed by Colonel Ashburnham. “Quick, quick,” cried the governor, “you must lose no more time; but all get away together. Here is already a deputation to remonstrate, but I have shut the fellows up in a room above, and they shall wait long enough before they see me.”

“But we must provide a horse for my good friend here,” said Lord Beverley, who was shaking Ashburnham by the hand.

“That’s all done, that’s all done,” said Sir John Hotham, “his horse and yours are both waiting in the court, and a party of men to see you safe out of the town, and to ensure that you speak with no one as you go. We must treat you as enemies, my lord, though we could wish you were friends.”

“But my horse,” cried the renowned

Captain Barecolt, "I have left him at the inn."

This intelligence somewhat discomposed Sir John Hotham; but it was at length determined that Barecolt should have a fresh pass made out in his own name, and should be left with this security, to find his way out of Hull as best he might; and the whole party issuing forth into the court, left Sir John Hotham to account for his conduct, in the matter of their liberation, to the partisans of the parliament in the town. In taking leave of him, also, we need only remind the reader, that these very events, not long afterwards, brought his head to the block.

## CHAPTER XIV.

PARTIES of the royalist army were moving in every direction round Hull, and from time to time saker and falconet, and such other artillery as the garrison had been able to muster on the walls, were discharged at the adventurous cavaliers who approached too near, when Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, having been permitted by the guard who had him in charge to gather his baggage hastily together at the Swan, and to saddle his horse, issued forth from the gates, leaving the horse on which Arrah Neil had ridden thither behind him, in the hands of Mrs. White, in part payment of his bill. Not that Mr. Dry had come unprovided with the needful means of meeting any

expenses he might incur ; far from it, for he was a wealthy man, and for many years had never known what even temporary want is ; but he loved barter, and generally gained by it ; and though he was, indeed, obliged to dispose of the nag at a loss to the good landlady, yet this loss, as he contrived it, was less than would have been incurred by any other process.

However, when he stood without the gates, and saw them closed behind him ; when he beheld, wherever he turned, some body of horse or foot at the distance of less than a mile ; and, more than all, when he heard a cannon boom over his head from above, the heart of Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, sank, and he felt a degree of trepidation he had never known in life before. What to do he could not tell ; but, after much deliberation, he resolved to stay where he was, till the royalist troops were withdrawn, calculating justly that they would not approach so near as to do him any harm, and that the troops within

would not issue forth while the others were in sight.

One point, indeed, he did not foresee. The Earl of Beverley and Colonel Ashburnham had passed out while he was at the inn; but the redoubtable Captain Barecolt was still behind; and as the evil fate of Mr. Dry would have it, just after he had remained under shelter of the archway for one hour and a quarter by the great clock, holding his horse by the bridle all the time, the gate behind him suddenly began to clank and rattle in the painful operation of giving exit to that great hero.

Mr. Dry started up, and looked behind him, lifting his foot towards the stirrup at the same moment; and, as soon as he beheld Captain Barecolt, he scrambled into the saddle as well as he could; but, alas! that renowned officer was already mounted, and Mr. Dry had to perform an operation which was difficult to him. He had got his left foot in the stirrup—he swung himself up into the saddle; but before his right foot could find its



place of repose (and Mr. Dry did not venture to spur on till it had), the gates were closed behind Captain Barecolt, and he himself by the puritan's side.

"Ha, ha! old drybones!" said that officer, "have I caught thee at length?"

"What want you with me, man of Belial?" demanded the master of Longsoaken, with the cat-in-a-corner courage of despair. "Get you gone upon your way, and let better men than yourself follow theirs."

"Nay, good faith!" answered Barecolt, stretching out his left hand, and grasping Mr. Dry's rein, "I always love that better men than myself should bear me company, and such is to be thy fate, O Dry; so do not think to escape it, for as sure as my name is de Capitaine Jersval, if you attempt any one of all those running tricks which you know so well how to practise, I will slit your weasand incontinent. It matters not two straws to me whether I have you alive or dead, but have your corpus I will, as the prisoner of my bow

and spear, as you would call it. Come, use your spurs, or I must spur your beast for you. You see that party of honest cavaliers there on the hill—terrible malignants, every one of them, that would have a pleasure in roasting you by a slow fire, like an old tough goose, and basting you with those strong waters that you love so well. To them we are going, so spur on with the alacrity which your good luck deserves. What!—you will not? Oh, then, I must make you!” and, drawing his sword, he pricked Mr. Dry’s horse so close to that worthy gentleman’s thigh, that he started, and rose in the stirrups.

The poor beast darted on in an instant, and, in so doing, shook Mr. Dry a good deal ; but whether the concussion elicited a brilliant thought from his brain or not, he exclaimed immediately after,—

“Hark ye, Captain Barecolt, I have a word for ye. Do not let us ride so fast. I have an offer to make. Listen a moment.”

Mr. Dry understood the peculiar genus of

captain to which Barecolt belonged, but he did not understand the exact variety. He knew that with most adventurous soldiers like himself, the food for which they hungered was gold. Drink might do much; dice might do much; fair ladies might do more; but gold, gold was paramount, an attraction not to be resisted. Mr. Dry loved gold, too, and over-valued its importance; but he felt a strong internal conviction that, if carried at once to the quarters of Lord Walton, life, which was the grand means of getting and enjoying gold, would be of a very short duration. He saw a noose dangling from a cross tree before his eyes, and he wisely calculated that it would be better to sacrifice some portion of the less valuable commodity to save the more valuable; and, therefore, he prepared to tempt his companion's cupidity—not without a faint hope of cheating him after all—but with the resolution of giving anything that might save his life.

A sudden thought, too, had struck Captain Barecolt, which he proceeded to follow out,

as will be seen presently; but its first effect was, to make him draw in his rein, and also check the horse of Mr. Dry, over which he exercised supreme command; and as he did so, he said, in a dry and bantering tone,—

“Well, worshipful Mr. Dry, speak what you have to speak. As you will not have leisure to use your tongue much more on earth, it would be hard to deny you a few words. You are going to the gallows, Mr. Dry—you are going to the gallows; and though I cannot promise that you shall swing as high as Haman, yet you shall have as decent an execution as time and circumstances permit, and plenty of room for your feet.”

“Nay,” said Dry, with a sort of sobbing sigh,—“you would not be so barbarous, so unchristian, especially when I am willing to pay ransom. Listen, captain—listen, noble Captain Barecolt—if you will not take me, and put me into the hands of yonder men of Belial, I will—I will go as far as a hundred pounds.”

“Men of Belial, sirrah!” cried Barecolt, turning upon him fiercely. “How dare you call his majesty’s forces men of Belial! That very word shall cost you five hundred pounds, if you would save your life.”

Though the captain’s words were fierce, yet they served to show that he was not quite inaccessible; and Mr. Dry began at once to higggle about his ransom; but Barecolt showed himself as hard a bargainer as he was himself; and as he perceived that every step they took in advance increased the trepidation of the worthy man of Longsoaken, he used the screw thus afforded him to squeeze Mr. Dry very painfully. Now he pushed on his horse—now he slackened his pace—now he pointed out a party of cavaliers approaching very near; and, discovering exactly what Mr. Dry had upon his person, he took care to make his demand much more, in order that he might have the opportunity of keeping him in his hands till the sum was paid, which was, indeed, the principal object he had in view.

Some difficulties, totally independent of Mr. Dry's natural reluctance to part with his money even to save his life, occurred in the course of the negotiation. Barecolt was well aware, from what he had seen of the king's conduct, that if the prisoner were taken to the camp, instead of mounting a ladder, he would more likely regain his liberty very speedily; and the worthy puritan, on the contrary, was terrified at the very thought of approaching the royal quarters—his consciousness of offences, grave and manifold, presenting instant death to his imagination as the only result. What, then, was to be done with him while he remained in the custody of Captain Barecolt? That valiant gentleman proposed that he should assume a false name, and pass as a friend of his in the camp; but Mr. Dry, remembering that he was known to many in Lord Walton's troop, rejected this idea as totally inconsistent with his own safety.

"You might as well hang me at once!" he said.

“That might be pleasant enough,” answered Barecolt, “were it not that you have only a hundred and fifty pounds about you, Master Dry. However, let me see; if we take this little hollow way to the left, methinks it will lead us to the hamlet just below the old church, I could stow you away in that building, as a young friend of mine was once served by some of your people, while I send for some of my own men to keep guard over you, and I go and report myself.”

“No, not there! not there!” cried he of Longsoaken, turning paler than ever. No, no! But there is an alehouse further on, where we could find accommodation. They are good and pious people there.”

“For which reason I will have nothing to do with them,” answered the profane captain. “No, but I know of a tavern just a mile from Beverley, where you can be lodged safely, Mr. Dry; and as, if you are taken and hanged, I lose five hundred good pounds, you may be quite sure that I will take as much pains to

keep your neck out of the halter as I will to guard against your escape. We will talk about the means of getting the money from Bishop's Merton hereafter; so, now, come on quick—we shall turn the flank of that party we saw upon the hill in five minutes, without them seeing us, if we keep in the hollow way; and should we meet any stragglers, you must either keep a silent tongue in your head, or curse and swear like a trooper."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Dry, turning up his eyes.

"Phoo!" cried Captain Barecolt, "I know you would trample on the cross as the Dutchmen do in Japan, to save your life," and with the assertion of this undeniable fact, he hurried forward, nor drew a rein till they reached the village, and the inn which he had mentioned.

They found three or four of the inferior followers of the court in possession of the public-house; but though two of them were known to the politic captain, they were not personages whom he chose to trust; and, con-



veying Mr. Dry to an upper room, he bestowed a small piece of silver upon one of the boys of the place to run up to Beverley, and bring down one Corporal Curtis from his troop. In the mean while, he informed Mr. Dry that it would be as well if he would give up, into his secure keeping, to be duly accounted for at an after period, all his worldly goods and chattels, including his tawny-sheathed steel-mounted sword; and though that worshipful person submitted with but an ill grace to the law of necessity, the pitiless captain employed very searching measures to ascertain that he retained nothing, either on his person or in his saddle-bags, but a decent change of apparel. When this was done, as Corporal Curtis had not yet appeared, Captain Barecolt called for a pottle of good wine, the cost of which he disbursed from Mr. Dry's stores, noting it carefully down in a small dirty memorandum-book, as he sagely remarked that he would have to reckon with that gentleman when they parted. The last cup was in the pottle-pot,

and the gallant officer was seriously thinking of calling for more, when a tall, athletic man was ushered in, having some resemblance to Barecolt himself, into whose hands the captain consigned Mr. Dry, with a positive and loud injunction not to lose sight of him even for a moment, and to shoot him through the head if he attempted to escape.

Corporal Curtis promised to obey, saying drily, with a nod at their companion, that he remembered the march from Bishop's Merton; and Barecolt, leaving him in such good hands, mounted his horse, and rode off to Beverley. He was kept there for many an hour before he could obtain a private audience of Lord Walton; but at the end of that period he was closeted with the young nobleman for a long time, and when their conference was at an end they walked away together to the quarters of Major Randal, where another long private conversation took place. What passed might be difficult as well as tedious to tell; but in the end, towards five o'clock of the afternoon,

Captain Barecolt returned to the village, where he had left his captive, accompanied by two stout troopers, selected by himself from his own troop; and ascending to the chamber of Mr. Dry, he announced to him, in a tone that admitted no reply, that he must mount, and accompany him at once towards Bishop's Merton.

"I have determined, most worshipful sir," he said, as soon as he had sent Corporal Curtis out of the room, "to see you safe on your way, till we are within half a day's march of Longsoaken. You will then have the goodness to give an order for the payment of your ransom to one of my friends, who will rejoin us when he has received it, and then I will set you free."

"How do I know you will do that?" demanded Dry, of Longsoaken, in a sullen tone.

"By making use of your common sense, Mr. Dry," replied Captain Barecolt. "Could I not hang you now, if I like it? Can I not hang you now, if it pleases me? Will I not

hang you now, if you affect to doubt the honour of a gentleman and a soldier? So no more on that score; but descend, mount, and march,—as you needs must.”

There was no remedy, and Mr. Dry obeyed, with vague hopes indeed of making his escape by some fortunate accident on the way. He argued that in the distracted state of the country, it was barely possible for Captain Barecolt to pass across a great part of England without either encountering some force of the opposite party, or pausing in some town which had espoused the parliamentary cause; and he believed that in either case his liberation must take place. But he little knew the forethought of that great stratagetic mind. Barecolt had furnished himself with correct information regarding the views and feelings of all the places he had to pass, and instead of taking his way by Coventry and Worcester, he led his little troop direct to Nottingham, Derby, and Shrewsbury, almost in the same course that the king followed shortly after;

and at every halting place Mr. Dry found himself so strictly watched that his hopes declined from hour to hour. He was never left alone, even for a moment; Captain Bare-colt himself, or one of the three soldiers who accompanied him, remaining with him night and day. The only chance that seemed left was in meeting with some friends as the party approached Bishop's Merton; but when Mr. Dry remembered that he was totally unarmed, his heart—never the most firm and daring—felt inconceivably low at the thought of a struggle; and the sanguinary and ferocious conversation of his captor—the list of slain that his arm had sent to their long account, the bloody battles he had seen, and the dire deeds he had done, made him tremble for the result of any attempt to escape.

At length familiar objects began to greet the eyes of Mr. Dry. He saw places and things which he had often seen before; and knew that he must be within one day's journey of Bishop's Merton; and the very feeling

revived, in some degree, his fainting courage. "Surely," he thought, "the people here must have retained their devotion to the good cause." But, alas! as he rode one morning into a town where he had often bought and sold, he beheld a party of Lord Hertford's horse, sitting jesting with the girls in the market-place; and the conversation which he heard as he went along showed him that times had changed, and people had changed with them.

On leading him up, as had been the inviolable custom since they set out, to a high room in the inn, Captain Barecolt, with a stern tone and countenance, told Corporal Curtis to set a soldier at the door, and to suffer no one to enter. Then waving his captive to a seat, he took a stool opposite, and after a solemn pause, addressed him thus :—

"Now, worshipful Master Dry, doubtless you have been puzzling the small wits that God has given you to discover how it happens that an officer like myself, high in the king's

confidence, has been induced to traverse so great an extent of country, solely for the purpose of receiving from a mechanical and trading person like yourself, the pitiful sum of five hundred pounds, which might have been transmitted by various other means ; and it is but fitting that you should know the worst. I and other persons of high rank and station have been made acquainted how, on the death of a poor old man, one Sergeant Neil, you rifled his cottage, and possessed yourself, amongst other things, of sundry papers appertaining to a young lady, who, for some years, has gone under the name of Arrah Neil, and was supposed to be his grand-daughter—Don't interrupt me.—Having brought you thus far, it is necessary to tell you, that besides an order upon some wealthy man at Bishop's Merton for the five hundred pounds before mentioned, which I shall send on by one of my troopers, it is necessary to your safety and liberation, that you should furnish Corporal Curtis with an exact statement of where the said papers are

to be found in your house at Longsoaken, and with an order to your people there to aid and assist my said corporal, in searching for and finding those documents, expressly stating that you have immediate need of them—Don't interrupt me—which indeed is the exact truth; for you must know that I have authority, under the hand of competent persons, in case you should show any reluctance to deliver up property belonging to other people, which you have stolen, to hang you upon the branch of a convenient tree in Wilbury Wood, as one taken in arms, in open rebellion—otherwise in flagrant delict, worshipful Master Dry. While dinner is getting ready, therefore, you will be good enough to think deliberately over the particulars, and make up your mind as to whether you will like the state of suspense at which I have hinted, better than a surrender of that which is not yours."

The varieties of hue which Mr. Dry's countenance had assumed while he listened to this long oration cannot be described here; for the



very attempt would require us to go through almost every shade that ever graced a painter's pallet. Captain Barecolt had three times told him not to interrupt him ; but it was a very unnecessary caution, as that worthy gentleman was too much confounded and thunderstruck to be able to utter a word ; and when at length his captor rose, and going to the door, conversed with the soldier for a few minutes, he remained in a state of impotent rage, bitterness, and disappointment, which had the curious effect of making him bite his under lip well nigh through with his teeth.

Captain Barecolt was inexorable, however ; the dinner was served ; and Mr. Dry, though he could with difficulty be brought to eat a mouthful, drank a good deal. The dinner was over, and Captain Barecolt called for writing materials, which were laid before the unfortunate Mr. Dry. He paused, and his hand shook ; but the captain was wonderfully calm and composed. He enjoyed the operation very much.

“First, if you please, worshipful Master Dry,” he said, “the order on some responsible citizen of Bishop’s Merton for five hundred pounds, to be paid at sight; and you will be good enough to eschew the word ransom, putting in that it is for your private necessities.”

Mr. Dry wrote as he was directed, and then Captain Barecolt, having examined the paper, placed another sheet before him, saying, “Now for the order to your steward, housekeeper, and all others of your people at Longsoaken, to aid and assist Mr. Curtis—eschew the word corporal, and merely style him your friend—to search for, &c. &c. &c.”

Mr. Dry again paused, and Captain Barecolt added, “Remember, I do not press you. I have orders not to press you. If you sign, well; we will go on to a certain cave you know of in Wilbury Wood, where I will keep you company till my men return, and as soon as I find that all which is required comes safe to hand, I will instantly set you free without

let or hindrance. But if you refuse to sign—I am not to press you, no, not in the least—I am only to hang you in Wilbury Wood, as a terror to all offenders. No, I do not press you in the least, Mr. Dry. Act as in your judgment you shall think it expedient.”

Mr. Dry took the pen once more, and with a wavering and uncertain hand wrote down the order very nearly in the terms which Captain Barecolt had dictated. He then stopped a moment, dipped the pen in the ink, gazed in the officer’s face, and then added his name.

“Ha, ha, ha!” cried Captain Barecolt, taking the paper, with a mocking laugh: “Here is a man who prefers giving up things that don’t belong to him, to being hung in a nice cool wood. What an extraordinary taste!” and walking to the door, he put his head out, saying, “Saddle the horses.”

“Devil!” cried Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, setting his teeth hard; and at the same time, by a rapid but silent movement, he drew a

long, sharp-pointed knife off the table, and hastily put it in his pocket.

“Come, Mr. Dry,” said Barecolt, turning round, “we shall soon part, if your people obey your orders, and your correspondent pays the money. So we may as well have another tankard to drink to our next merry meeting. It will make but a small item in your bill. Hillo, there! Bring another tankard, and mind it be of the best.”

But when the wine came, Mr. Dry refused to drink, saying, sullenly, he had had enough to quench his thirst for a week. Captain Barecolt laughed again, for the writhing of his victim was pleasant to him; and taking up the large jug of wine, he replied, “We have not had you long enough amongst us, Mr. Dry. You should really bear us company a little longer, to learn to drink deep. This is the way a true soldado discusses a stoup of good Bordeaux,” and setting the brim to his lips, he never took it away till the tankard was empty.

"Now, to horse, to horse!" he cried, and making Mr. Dry go down and mount before him, he sprang lightly upon horseback, seeming all the more brisk and active for his liquor.

After some little shaking of hands and bidding good-by between Captain Barecolt and his men, and the troopers of Lord Hertford, in the streets, the captain's little party rode out of the town, and were soon in the midst of fields and lanes again. Then came a wide, bare common, extending for three or four miles on every side, and as they crossed it, appeared a large old wood lying straight before them, and falling into deep waves of brown foliage, with misty dells between.

"Ay, there is old Wilbury Wood, Master Dry," said Captain Barecolt; "you know it well, I dare say."

"You seem to know it well too," answered the puritan, eyeing him askance.

"To be sure I do," replied the renowned captain; "and while the men are gone upon

their errand, I will tell you how. Keep your curiosity cool till then, Master Dry, and you shall be satisfied."

"I have no curiosity about it," growled the puritan.

"Well then you shall hear, whether you have curiosity or not," answered the captain; and on they rode, following a somewhat lonely and unfrequented path, into the heart of the wood. The old trees fell round them in wild groups and strange fantastic forms; the hares bounded away in the underwood, and the squirrels, crossing the path, ran gaily up the trees, while a jay flew on before and scolded them from a bough overhead.

"I think this should be the turning," said the gallant captain, at length. "Does not this lead to the cave, Master Dry?"

"Seek it yourself, if you want it," answered his companion.

"You are discourteous, knave," said Barecolt, giving him a blow on the ribs that made the worthy gentleman's breath come short.

“Learn to be civil to your betters;” and turning his horse up the path, at the mouth of which he had stopped, he led his little party with unerring sagacity to a high rocky promontory in the wood, in the base of which appeared a hollow, some ten or twelve feet deep. He there dismounted, and made Mr. Dry do the same, and seeing him safely lodged in the cave, he gave one of the papers to Corporal Curtis, saying, “Take Jukes with you, and do as I told you, corporal. Avoid the town, and be back before dark; for if they do not give up the papers, I shall want you to help to hang our friend there.”

His back was turned to Master Dry; and as he uttered these words aloud, he winked upon the corporal significantly with one small eye.

“They will obey my order,” said Dry.

“I trust they will,” rejoined Barecolt, solemnly. “You, Jones, take this to Bishop’s Merton, and get the money. You may tell Master Winkfield, on whom it is drawn, that

Master Dry wants it sadly. So he does, poor man! Look about the town, too, before you return, and see what is going on. I heard this morning that they are turning loyal; and if so, I may honour them with a visit myself some day."

The men rode away, and Captain Barecolt, after having secured the horses to two trees, took his pistols from the saddle, and rejoined his prisoner in the cave. There seating himself on the ground, with his long legs stretched out across the mouth of the excavation, he waved Mr. Dry with a commanding air to seat himself also. It was easy to perceive that Captain Barecolt had been rendered somewhat more grand in his own opinion by the last stoup of wine which he had tossed off, with no more ceremony than if it had been a gill, and his captive, feeling that it might be dangerous to oppose him even in a trifle, instantly bent his hocks to the ground, being at the same time somewhat weary with a ride of more than thirty miles that morning.



Captain Barecolt first began by examining the priming of his pistols, the muzzles of which every now and then swept Mr. Dry's person in a manner that made him very uncomfortable ; but when this operation was finished, and the pistols replaced in his belt, the royalist officer turned his looks upon Mr. Dry with a sort of compassionate contempt that was extremely irritating. " Ah ! Master Dry, Master Dry," he said ; " both you and I know this wood very well. You often used to come here when you were an apprentice boy with old Nicholas Cobalter ; and many a pound of sugar and salt have you hid away in that corner just behind where you are now sitting—many an ounce of pepper have you laid in the nook just over your head, till you could dispose of your pilferings."

Mr. Dry said nothing, but gazed at Captain Barecolt from under his bent brows, with a look of hatred and fear, such as might be supposed to pass over his countenance if he had seen the infernal spirit.

“Ay,” continued the officer, in a somewhat maudlin and sentimental tone, “those were pleasant days, Mr. Dry, especially when you used to take a walk in this wood with buxom Mrs. Cobalter, when her husband went to London town; and she used to say if ever he died you should be her second, because you were tender of her feelings, and connived at her dealing with the pottle-pot more freely than her husband liked.”

“And who the devil are you?” cried Mr. Dry, furiously; forgetting all his sanctity in the irritating state of apprehension and astonishment to which he was reduced.

“Ay, those were merry times, Master Dry,” continued Barecolt, without noticing his intemperate question, and fixing one eye upon his companion’s face, while the other rolled vacantly round the cave, as if searching for memories or ideas. “Yes, Master Dry, no one would have thought to see you the master of Longsoaken in those days. But it all came of the widow, and your stepping in, by her

help, into all that old Cobalter left. Fair or foul, Master Dry, it matters not—you got it, and that made a man of you!”

“And who in the fiend’s name are you?” demanded the puritan, almost springing at his throat.

“I will tell you, Ezekiel Dry,” answered Barecolt, bending forward and gazing sternly in his face—“I will tell you. I am Daniel Cobalter — ay, little Daniel, the old man’s only nephew—his brother’s son, whom you cheated, with the widow’s aid, of his uncle’s inheritance, and left to go out into the world with five crown-pieces and a stout heart; and now that I have you here face to face in Wilbury Wood, what have you to say why I should not blow your brains out, for all that you have done to me and mine?”

Mr. Dry, of Longsoaken, shrunk into nothing, while Barecolt continued to gaze upon him as sternly as if he could have eaten him alive. A moment after, however, the gallant captain’s face relaxed its awful frown, and

with a withering and contemptuous smile he went on.—“But set your mind at ease, worm ! You are safe in my scorn. I have done better for myself than if I had been tied down to a mechanical life. But take warning by what has happened, and do not let me catch you any more at these same tricks, or I will put my boot heel upon your head, and tread your brains out like a viper’s. There, sit there, and be silent till the men come back ; for if I see you move, or hear you speak, you will raise choler in me.”

The gallant captain then rose and stood for a minute in the mouth of the cave, and then returned again, and seated himself, looking at Dry with a sneering smile. “Now art thou hammering thy poor thin brains to find how Daniel Cobalter has become Captain Barecolt ; but if thou twistest the letters into proper form, thou wilt find that I have not taken one from any man’s name but my own. That is no robbery, Dry !”

“Nay, I see ! I see !” said the puritan.

“Ay, dost thou so?” rejoined Barecolt; “then see and be silent;” and he leaned his head upon his hand, and gazed forth from the mouth of the cave. Presently, Captain Barecolt’s head nodded, and his breath came more heavily. Dry, of Longsoaken, gazed at him with his small eyes full of fierce and baleful light; but his face did not grow red or heated with the angry passion that was evidently working within him. On the contrary, it was as white as that of a corpse. “Ruin!” he muttered in a low voice to himself—“ruin!” and at the same time he put his right hand in his pocket, where he had concealed the knife.

But Captain Barecolt suddenly raised his head. “You moved!” he said sternly.

“It was but for my ease,” answered Dry, in a whining tone; “this ground is very hard.”

“Sit still!” rejoined the captain frowning, and then resumed the same attitude. In two or three minutes he breathed hard again, and then he snored, for he had drank much

wine and ridden far. For a few minutes Mr. Dry thought he was feigning sleep, and yet it seemed very like reality—sound, heavy, dull.

“It must be speedily, or not at all!” he thought to himself; “the other men may soon be back. Soft—I will try him;” and rising, he affected to look out of the mouth of the cave. Captain Barecolt slept on.

Ezekiel Dry trembled very much; but he quietly put his hand once more into his pocket, and drew forth the knife. He grasped it tight; he took a step forward to the sleeping man’s side. Barecolt, accustomed to watch, started, and was rising; but ere he could gain his feet, the blow descended on his right breast, and, leaving the knife behind, Dry darted out of the cave.

The blood gushed forth in a stream; but with a quick and firm hand, Barecolt drew a pistol from his belt, cocked it, took a step forward, levelled, and fired. Dry, of Longsoaken, sprang up a foot from the ground, and fell

heavily upon the forest grass, with his blood and brains scattered round.

“Ha!” cried Barecolt, “ha! Master Dry—but I feel marvellous faint—very faint; I will sit down;” and, resuming his seat, he leaned back, while his face became as pale as ashes, and the pistol fell from his hands.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE attempt upon Hull had been abandoned ; and mortified and desponding, Charles I. had quitted Beverley, and pursued his march through the land. The Earl of Essex lay in force at Northampton ; but no show of energy announced at this time the successes which the parliamentary armies were ultimately to obtain. The mightier spirits had not yet risen from the depth ; and the ostensible engines with which faction worked were, as usual, the cunning artifice, the well-told lie, the exaggerated grievance, the suppressed truth, the dark insinuation, by which large classes—if not whole nations—may be stirred up either for good or evil. There was activity in all the small and petty arts of agitation—there was



activity in those courses which prepare the way for greater things ; but in that which was to decide all, arms, tardiness, if not sloth, was alone apparent.

It is strange, in reviewing all great political convulsions, to remark how petty are the events, and how small are really the men by which great success is obtained, though insignificant incidents swell into importance by their mass, and mean characters gain a reflected sublimity from the vastness of the results by which their deeds are followed. Even individual vices and weaknesses acquire a certain grandeur under the magnifying power of important epochs, and from the uses to which they are turned ; and the hypocrisy of Cromwell, and the bombast of Napoleon, which would have excited little but contempt in less prominent persons, appear in a degree sublime, by being displayed on a wider stage, and employed as means to a mightier end. We are too apt to judge of efforts by results, as of people by their success,

noticing but little in the appreciation of men's characters, one of the chief elements which distinguish the great from the little—the objects which they propose to themselves; and, in our judgment of their skill, taking into small account the difficulties that opposed and the facilities that favoured the accomplishment of their designs; and it is curious to remark, that the revolutions which have carried great usurpers into power have always raised the ambitious, and left the patriotic behind, as if human selfishness were the only motive which can insure that continuity of effort and unity of purpose which alone can command success amongst the struggles of diverse factions, and the development of infinitely varied opinions.

The Earl of Essex was a higher-minded man than Cromwell, but he had doubts and hesitations which Cromwell's ambition would not entertain; and there can be but little doubt that he was unwilling to strike the first irrevocable blow against an army commanded by his sovereign in person. Doubtless he fan-

ced, as many did, that the small force collected tardily by a monarch without supplies, would speedily melt away, and leave Charles, of sheer necessity, to accept any terms that the parliament chose to dictate ; but whatever was the cause, the king was permitted, unopposed, to march to Shrewsbury, while the parliamentary forces lay inactive at Northampton. The reception given to the monarch in the town was such as to encourage high hopes in all ; and as Wales was rising in his favour, it was judged expedient that Charles should visit the principality in person, while the army recruited itself on the banks of the Severn, and every effort was made to obtain a supply of arms and money. Provisions, indeed, were abundant ; the royalist troops were regularly paid ; greater order and more perfect discipline were maintained than had ever before been observed in the army, and a state of calm and cheerful enjoyment reigned in the good old town, which is but too seldom known in civil war.

Such was the state of things, when one evening, a little before sunset, just after the king had left Shrewsbury for Wales, two persons, a gentleman and lady, wandered along through the fields on the banks of the river, full once more of happy dreams, and hopes of bright hours to come. Lord Beverley gazed down into his fair companion's eyes, as she lifted her sunny look towards his fine expressive face, and he saw in those two wells of light the deep pure love of which he had so often dreamed; while Annie Walton, in the countenance of him who regarded her with such fond thoughtfulness, read the intense and passionate tenderness which only can satisfy the heart, and teach the spirit of woman to repose with calm security on the love of her future husband. It is too late in the tale either to paint the feelings which were in the bosom of each at that moment, or to tell the words of dear affection that they spoke; the thrill of mutual attachment; the trembling flutter of her heart, as she thought of the near

approaching hour; the glad eagerness of his, to call her his own, beyond the power of fate; the visions of future joy, and the long vistas of happy years which the warm imagination of each presented; not the less bright and sparkling, because, on her side, as on his, though from different causes, vague clouds and indistinct shadows hung over parts of the scene which fancy painted. Come what might, they were in a few days to be united; and that was enough for the hour.

They had been talking long over their plans and prospects; the old house of Longnar Hall was to be their abode for the next three weeks; their marriage was to be as private and quiet as even Annie Walton's heart could desire; and the circumstances of the times gave fair excuse for cutting off all ceremonies, and casting away all formal delays. Of three weeks they thought themselves secure, and within that little space was bounded all the real lifetime of their hopes. Beyond—what was beyond? Who could say? And yet

they dreamed of days long after, and fancy looked over the prison walls of the present, and told them of fair scenes and glowing landscapes, which only her eye could descry.

“ I could have wished,” said Annie Walton, after a pause, “ that Charles could have been married on the same day.”

The earl smiled. “ Then you see it now, beloved ?” he replied.

“ Nay, Francis, who could help seeing it ?” asked Miss Walton. “ Arrah, herself, must see and know it ; and yet she seems not so happy, not so cheerful, as I should have thought such knowledge would make her, for I am very sure that she has loved him long, and at one time I feared for and pitied her.”

“ And he has loved her long, too, Annie,” replied the earl ; “ longer than you believe, or than he himself knew. This passion has been growing, like a flower in the spring ; first, in the bud, as pity ; then showing its first hues, as deep interest and tenderness ; then partly expanding, like the timid blushing blossom,

that seems to fear that even the green leaves around should look into its glowing breast; and at last, on the first warm day, opening wide to the bright sun. Charles Walton, when first I saw your own dear eyes at Bishop's Merton, felt love, or something very like it, for Arrah Neil; and yet he would have been strangely hurt if any had told him that he ever thought of the poor, wild, cottage girl, with aught but mere compassion."

"You men are strange beings," replied Annie Walton, with a sigh and a smile at the same time; "and yet I am not without my fears for that dear child. Unless the proofs of who she is can be found, and clearly made out, what will be Charles's conduct?"

"I will tell you, love," answered Lord Beverley. "Pride will yield, Annie, to the noblest and strongest quality of your brother's heart—the sense of honour. He has displayed his love for her too openly to herself for Charles Walton to hesitate. Other men might do so, and think themselves justified

in sacrificing both her peace, and their own affection, to the cold judgment of the world ; but if a time should come, when he has to ask himself, how he is to act to Arrah Neil, still poor, still unknown in position, and even in name, he will feel himself plighted to her by the words and looks of these days, and as I have said, he will not hesitate."

"I trust it may be so," replied the lady ; "and, indeed, I think it will, for he is generous and kind ; but yet I wish this man would return with the papers that he undertook to bring. Here several weeks have passed, and no tidings have been heard of him. Surely that sad hypocrite, Dry, cannot have bribed him."

"Oh! no," exclaimed the earl, with a laugh ; "all men have their own notions of honour, dearest ; and though he is loose and dissolute, a babbler and a braggadocio, yet his courage and his fidelity are beyond doubt. He is either dead, or he will come back ; but what is that lying in the grass?"



“Good heaven! it is a dead man,” cried Annie Walton, turning pale.

“Nay, some one asleep, rather,” said her lover, “he is not like the dead. See, his arm is folded to pillow his head. Wait here a moment, Annie, and I will go and see.”

Lord Beverley advanced to the spot where the person they had been speaking of was stretched in the long grass, and gazed upon him for an instant without speaking. Then, taking him by the arm, he shook him gently to rouse him, and with a start the sleeper sat up and gazed around.

“Good gracious me!” he cried, as first he woke, “where am I? Ah, my lord, the earl! is that you? Well, this is a lucky chance indeed!”

“Why, how came you sleeping here, Master Falgate?” inquired the earl; “and how did you get out of Hull?”

“I came here on the carriage provided by nature, my good lord,” answered the painter; “and I was sleeping because I could not keep

my eyes open. To get out of Hull was no difficulty, but to get out of Worcester was hard work indeed ;” and he went on to relate how he had travelled from Hull, on foot, to Worcester, and there, having ventured upon some loyal speeches, over a cup of ale, had found himself speedily under charge of a guard, from whom he escaped, after innumerable obstacles (which need not be detailed to the reader), and had walked from that city to the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury, a distance of more than forty-seven miles, between the preceding midnight and one o’clock of that day, when, utterly exhausted, he had lain down to rest, and fallen asleep.

“ This is an old friend of mine, dear Annie,” said the earl, turning to Miss Walton, who had come slowly up when she saw that the poor painter was not dead ; “ and as he showed good discretion in my case, at a very critical moment, we must do what we can for him. So, Master Falgate,” he continued, “ the good folks of Worcester seem very rebelliously in-

clined to treat you so harshly for a few loyal words."

"Good faith! my noble lord, the men of Worcester had little to do with it," replied Falgate. "It was Lord Essex's soldiers that were so barbarous to poor me. Have you not heard that he took up his quarters at Worcester yesterday?"

"No, indeed!" said the earl, with a cloud coming over his countenance, at the thought of fresh dangers and delays. "No, indeed; but come with us into the city, Falgate. Your intelligence must be valuable; and as for yourself, I must do what I can to place you in some good regiment of foot."

"No, no, my lord," answered the painter, "I have done with soldiering; I was never made for it. I do not like to paint men's faces with blood, or see it done. All that you can do for me is to bring me to speak to a noble gentleman, named Lord Walton, if such a thing is ever to take place; for I have hunted him to Beverley, to York, to Nottingham, and

then finding the roundheads in the way, in an unlucky day took Worcester on my road hither. So I do think I shall never see him."

"Nothing can be more easy, my good friend," answered the earl, "Lord Walton is here, and this lady is his sister. So come with us, and you will see him in a few minutes."

The poor painter, who was not without his share of taste, was delighted at his meeting with Miss Walton, whose beautiful face and form were ready passports to his respect and admiration: nor did her words and manner produce less effect; for, to the heart of Annie, the least service rendered to him she loved, made the doer interesting in her eyes; and with gentle tones and kindly looks, she told poor Diggory Falgate that she had heard of him, and of his discretion, from Lord Beverley, and thanked him deeply for the caution he had shown. Had Diggory Falgate been Captain Barecolt, she would instantly have had a full account of all that had been done to save the earl, by informing Sir John Hotham

of his situation, together with various additions and improvements, which would have left all the honour of his deliverance with the worthy narrator. But Falgate, to whom the presence of beauty had something almost awful in it, did not even take to himself the credit that was rightly his due, but walked on nearly in silence beside the earl and his fair companion, till entering the town of Shrewsbury, they reached the house where Lady Margaret Langley and her young relations had taken up their abode, near the Wellington gate of the city.

“Is Lord Walton within?” the earl demanded, addressing one of the servants in the old porch; and the answer was, “Yes, my lord. He is in the small room on the left with my lady,” and leading Annie on, with Falgate following close behind, Lord Beverley entered the chamber, saying, “Here is a good friend of mine, Charles, who brings you tidings from Hull.”

Lord Walton rose from a seat between that

of Lady Margaret and fair Arrah Neil, gazing upon the painter through the dim evening light, which found its way in at the tall lattice window, without the slightest recollection of his face, as, indeed, he had never before seen him. But the moment that Falgate beheld Arrah Neil, he advanced a step or two towards her, then stopped and hesitated, for her dress was much altered, and then went on again, but with a timid and doubtful air.

Arrah, however, welcomed him with a kindly smile, holding out her hand to him, and saying, "Ah! Master Falgate, I am glad to see you safe. This is the person whom I mentioned, Charles, who aided my escape from Hull."

"He deserves all our thanks, dear Arrah," replied Charles Walton, "and every recompense that we can give him; but did I understand right, sir, that you have business with me?"

"Why, I had, my noble lord," answered Falgate, in a somewhat faltering tone; "but—but as I have found this young lady, I think it is to

her I should speak, for the business is her own. I only asked for your lordship, because—because I had heard that you were her best friend.”

“Oh, yes! indeed he is,” exclaimed Arrah Neil, warmly; “and whatever is to be said, had better be said to him; he can judge rightly of things that I do not understand.”

“Well, then, speak to me here, sir,” said Lord Walton, retiring towards the window. “You had better come, too, Arrah; for we may want you in our council.”

Falgate followed to the other side of the room, and Arrah Neil rose and joined them; while Annie Walton seated herself beside her aunt, and Lord Beverley took a place on the other side of Lady Margaret’s chair, engaging her attention by an account of their walk. Nor was it accidentally he did so; for he knew that at that moment, though the fine countenance of the old dame was calm, there were many thoughts and memories, many doubts and hopes, busy in her bosom—too

busy far for peace. In the mean time, he turned his eyes every now and then towards the window, against which appeared the fine and dignified form of Lord Walton, with the light of evening shining full upon his lordly brow and chiselled features, and the sweet profile of Arrah Neil, with the graceful outline of her figure, all in deep shade. The painter seemed speaking eagerly, while they listened—and from time to time Charles Walton bent his head, or asked a question ; while Arrah Neil, with her face inclined towards the ground, once or twice raised her handkerchief to her eyes, and seemed to wipe away a tear. At length the painter drew forth from his pocket a small packet (which he placed in Lord Walton's hands), and a slip of paper which he held, while the young nobleman examined eagerly the contents of the packet. They seemed various ; some of them being letters and scraps of parchment, some small trinkets. When he had gazed upon them all, one after the other, Charles Walton gave them to Arrah



Neil—first, however, drawing her arm through his own, as if to support her. Then, taking the paper from Falgate's hand, he read what was written on it attentively; and, turning once more to his fair companion, he kissed her tenderly, adding a few words,—the last of which sounded like “my dear cousin.”

Lady Margaret Langley caught them, and started up, but instantly resumed her seat; and Lord Walton, taking Arrah's hand in his, while he supported her trembling steps with his arm, led her forward to the old lady's chair. The fair girl sank upon her knees, and bent her head before Lady Margaret, while, in a low and solemn voice, the young nobleman said,—

“My dear aunt, it is as you have dreamed. This sweet girl is your child's child.”

Lady Margaret said not a word, but cast her arms round Arrah Neil, bent her brow upon her fair neck, and wept in silence;—then raised her tearful eyes towards heaven, and sobbed aloud. The old stag-hound, too,

as if he comprehended all, and shared in all, approached, and, with a low whine, licked his mistress's withered hand. She speedily grew calm, however, and looking up to her nephew, without taking her arm from Arrah's neck, she asked,—

“But is it all true, Charles?—is it all proved? Is she the heiress of my house?”

“Nothing but a few minute links in the chain of evidence are wanting,” replied Lord Walton; “and quite enough is proved, my dear aunt, to leave no doubt whatever on our minds, as I will show you, though other papers, indeed, are wanting at present, which might be needful to establish her rights and legitimacy in a court of law. Whatever may be its decision, however, to us she must be ever our own dear cousin, Arabella Tyrone.”

“Ah, no, no!” cried the poor girl, starting up, and clasping her hands; “still Arrah Neil to you, Charles—to all of you, still Arrah Neil!”

Lord Walton gazed on her with a look of

earnest tenderness, and a faint smile crossed his fine lip. Perhaps he thought that whatever was her name for the time, she would soon be Arabella Walton ; but he would not agitate her more at that moment, and was about to proceed with the account he was rendering to Lady Margaret, when Lord Beverley advanced, and extended his arms to Arrah Neil. She gazed upon him in surprise ; but he pressed her to his bosom warmly, eagerly, and kissed her brow, exclaiming,—

“ Fear not, dear child, fear not ! The same blood flows in your veins as in mine. I am not deceived, Lady Margaret—her father was my mother’s brother. Is it not so ? ”

“ It is,” said Lady Margaret. “ Ask me no questions yet, my child. He is your cousin ; and he and his have forgiven me and mine. I trust that God has forgiven us, and you may have to do so, too, when you hear all. Say, will you do it, Arrah ? ”

The fair girl fell upon her neck and kissed her ; and Annie Walton then claimed her

share of tenderness, though to her the tale had been developed more gradually, and was not heightened by surprise.

It was a strange and touching scene, however, even to one who witnessed it like the poor painter, without any personal interest in the recovery of the lost lamb ; and Falgate's eyes were as full of tears as those of the rest, when he was called forward by Lord Walton to give an exact account of how he had found the packet which he had brought that day. His tale was somewhat confused, and the particulars need not be related here, as the reader is already acquainted with them : but when he spoke of the account given by the good hostess of the inn, and pointed out the facts she had written down ; when he detailed his visit to the vault, and the opening of the coffin, Lady Margaret Langley sobbed aloud, exclaiming,—

“ My child ! oh, my child !—Ah ! didst thou die so near me, and no mother's hand to close thine eyes ? ”

When she had somewhat recovered, how-

ever, she took the tokens and the papers which had been found in the coffin, and gazed upon them, one after the other, with many a sad comment. There were two rings she recollected well. One she had given herself, and a small gold circlet for the brow. It was on her child's sixteenth birth-day, she said, the last she ever spent within her father's halls. Then she read the certificate of marriage, and a short statement of events, in a hand that she knew too well, wiping the bitter drops from her eyes that she might see the words; and then she kissed the name written below, and drawing Arrah to her heart, embraced her long. At length she looked round and asked,—

“What is there wanting, Charles? All doubt is done away.”

“To us it is, my dear aunt,” answered Lord Walton; “but the law will require proof that this dear girl, so long called Arrah Neil, is the same as the child whom old Sergeant Neil brought from Hull to Bishop's Merton many

years ago. Those proofs, I hope, will be soon found. Indeed, I expected that they would have been brought hither ere now. Some strange delay has taken place, but doubtless some mere accident has caused it; and, at all events, we are satisfied."

Miss Walton whispered something to her brother as he ended, to which he replied quickly,—

"You are right, Annie; I will do it. Stay with my aunt, and cheer her till we return. There is a tale to be told to this dear girl," he said, speaking to Lady Margaret, "which is too sad for you to tell. Let me do it, my dear aunt—I know all the facts."

"Ay, but not the feelings, Charles," replied the old lady; "yet do so if you will. I can tell the rest hereafter, when I am calmer—for this will pass away. I never thought to have shed tears again. I fancied the fountains were dried up. Tell her, Charles, tell her; but not here."

"No; I will speak with her in the dining-

hall," replied Lord Walton. "Come, dear Arrah. It is better to perform a painful task at once;" and, taking her hand, he led her from the room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

It was a large old hall, lined with black oak. The sun was setting, but setting in splendour; and the rich rosy light poured in through the windows, casting a faint glow upon the old carved wreaths and glistening panels.

“Perhaps,” said Lord Walton, as they entered, and he closed the door, “perhaps I had better order them to bring lights, dear Arrah; for the sun will be down ere my tale is told.”

“Oh, no,” answered Arrah Neil, “there will be light enough for so sad a story as this must be; and we can sit in this window where we can see the last look of day.”

Her cousin led her to one of those old-



fashioned window-seats, where many of us have sat in our own youth, and took his place beside his fair companion, gazing with her for a moment out upon the evening sky. At length with a start, as if he had forgotten for a time the cause of their coming, he said,—

“ But to my tale, Arrah. Many years ago, my poor aunt fancied herself the happiest of women. Far from courts and crowds, in the midst of wild scenes that suited her turn of mind, and with a husband who loved her deeply, and a daughter whom they both adored. Sir Richard Langley was a soldier, however, of much renown; and in the wars of Ireland he carried Lady Margaret and their child to Dublin. They there became first acquainted with a young Irish nobleman, nearly related to that great man—for I must call him so, though he was a rebel—the celebrated Earl of Tyrone. Your mother was then but a child, dear Arrah, and this nobleman a youth; but after the return of Sir Richard and his wife to Langley Hall, he came to visit his eldest sister, who

was then married to the Earl of Beverley. Near neighbourhood produced intimacy; but the Irish noble and the English knight differed on many a point—in mere opinion, it is true; but the effect was such, that when the young man asked the hand of the old man's daughter, it was refused with some discourtesy. Lady Margaret herself would not hear of such a marriage, though rank, and station, and fortune all were his; but she loved not to part with her daughter, and, still less, to part with her for a land which she looked upon as barbarous and full of strife. Your father, Arrah, was rash and vehement, impatient of opposition, and easily moved to every daring deed, though generous, and kind, and full of honour. He had gained your mother's love, too, and he knew it; and when he left Langley Hall, rejected in his suit, he vowed that six months should not pass ere she should be his bride. Not six weeks went by when, after going out to walk, sad and lonely, as had become her custom, she did not return. Search

was made, but she could not be found, and no certain information was to be obtained. One man had heard a distant cry—one had seen a ship hovering on the coast hard by, and several had met a troop of men—strangers, evidently, from both their dress and language—wandering near Langley Hall. A few weeks of terrible suspense passed, and then Lady Margaret received a letter in her daughter's hand, signed 'Arabella Tyrone.' It told of her marriage with him she loved; and that love was openly acknowledged. There was, indeed, a vague hint given that she had not gone willingly, nor intentionally disobeyed her parents; but no details were afforded.

"The answer was written in anger, bidding her see them and write to them no more; and Sir Richard, remembering the vow of him who was now his son-in-law, swore that he would find a time to make him beg for pardon on his knees. Years passed ere that bitter vow could be exercised. Your father, for the sake of an adored wife, bent his spirit to sue by letter for

forgiveness and oblivion of the past; but that did not satisfy the stern old man, and at length his time came. Fresh troubles broke out in Ireland. Sir Richard Langley received a fresh command; and against your father—then, alas! preparing to take arms against the government—he chiefly urged an expedition. That country has always had divisions and feuds in its own bosom; and a party of the enemies of Tyrone were easily found to join their efforts to a small body of regular troops, and guide them through the passes to your father's castle."

"I remember it well," said Arrah Neil, "and the terrace looking to the mountains."

"When Sir Richard found that he whom he sought was absent with his wife and child," continued Lord Walton, "and that there was likely to be the most desperate resistance without fruit, he was inclined to pause, and perhaps might have retreated; but those with whom he was now acting overruled his will.

They would not hear of delay or hesitation with their enemy's hold before them. He remonstrated in vain; the attack commenced; and though he took no part therein, and likewise restrained his men, he had the grief of seeing his daughter's dwelling taken, pillaged, and burned to the ground before his eyes. There, alas! perished, dear Arrah, the poor sister of my friend your cousin; and the sight of her blackened remains, which at first he would hardly believe were not yours—though he had before been told you were not there—turned the heart of Sir Richard Langley to more charitable thoughts. He repented bitterly; but the cup of his chastisement was not yet full. Your father, after having seen your mother and yourself embark to seek refuge in Holland, was taken by a party of the old knight's troops, demanded by the government as a state prisoner, and in spite of every effort, remonstrance, prayer, and petition, was tried and executed as a traitor. Pardon me, dear Arrah, that I speak such harsh words, and do

so without trying to soften them, for I wish to be as brief as may be."

Arrah Neil wept, but made no answer, and Lord Walton went on,—

"Amongst those who most earnestly entreated for your father's life, were Sir Richard Langley and my aunt, Lady Margaret; but those were times, Arrah, when pampered sovereignty had never known the softening touch of adversity, and flatterers and knaves were heard, when the honest and true were scorned. Nought availed; and the old knight gave himself up to bitter remorse. Your poor mother was sought for, and every post took a letter to some one of those lands which it was supposed she might have visited; but no such person was found, and at length a vague rumour reached Langley Hall that she and her child were dead. Whence it came, what was its foundation, no one could discover; but, as year rolled on after year, and no tidings arrived, the report was credited. The old man accused himself of murdering his daugh-

ter and her husband; inflicted on himself strange and superstitious punishments; and, though poor Lady Margaret, knowing that her heart was not burdened with the deeds that had taken place, bore her sad bereavement more tranquilly, yet she could not altogether exculpate herself from the charge of harshness, and she shared in all his penitence, and took part in all his grief. Though remorse often goes with long life, yet such was not the case here. Sir Richard Langley died after four or five years of unavailing regret, and Lady Margaret remained as you have seen her, changed, very much changed, from what she once was, but yet with fine and noble principles at heart. She was always of a somewhat wild and enthusiastic temper of mind, and that disposition has deviated of late into great eccentricity of character. The thing that she has most loved and cherished—if not the only thing—has been that faithful dog, who was saved when young from the burning castle of your poor father, and who, on the

night of your arrival, displayed such strange signs of recognition."

"Oh, I remember him well now!" replied Arrah Neil; "there was a sunny bank below the terrace, near a small lake, and I used to lie with my little arms round his shaggy neck, and laugh when he bit in play at the curls of my hair. It seems but yesterday, now that the dark mist has been removed between me and memory. But go on, Charles; I do but stop you."

Lord Walton had fallen into a reverie; a sweet one it was, to which he had been led by the picture that she drew of her fair self in infancy. He thought he saw her on the flowery bank at sport with her rough companion, and he might have paused to gaze long at that pleasant sight, had not her words roused him.

"I have no more to tell, dear Arrah," he replied; "the rest of your fate and history you know better than I do; but yet there is one point——"



He stopped and gazed upon her, as far as the fading light would let him do so, and his heart beat more than he had thought anything on earth could have made it do. Arrah Neil raised her eyes with a look of inquiry to his face; but the inquiry was instantly answered by what she saw there, and with a cheek of crimson she withdrew her glance as soon as it was given.

“Arrah,” said Lord Walton, in a low and agitated tone, “I have loved you long—longer, I find now, than I myself have known. Ay, Arrah, I have loved you from childhood; and lately I have thought—have hoped—have dreamed, perhaps—that you loved me.”

Arrah Neil was silent for a moment—only a moment; but she did nothing like any one else; and once more raising her eyes to his face, she laid her soft hand on his and asked, “Who have I ever loved but you?” and then the tears rolled over the long lashes, and diamonded her cheek.

Charles Walton had felt in those few brief

moments as he had never felt before—as he had never imagined that he could feel. He, the calm, the firm, the strong-minded, had felt timid as a child before the cottage-girl, the object of his long bounty, the partaker of his house's charity; and he knew from that strange sensation how powerful was the love within him; while she, though agitated, though moved, gained from the very pure singleness of the one strong passion which had dwelt in her breast for years, that strength to avow it which he seemed scarcely able to command.

But that avowal once made on her part—though he knew it, though he could not doubt it before—restored him at once to himself again; and casting his arms round her, he called her his own dear bride.

A few minutes passed in sweet emotions—in words so broken and confused that they would seem nonsense if here written—in signs and tokens of the heart which form a sacred language that ought not to be transcribed. But then Charles Walton spoke of his sister's near

approaching marriage, and urged that she whom he loved would put the seal that day upon their fate also.

Arrah turned pale and shook her head; and when her lover, with soothing words and kind assurances, sought to remove what he believed to be the mere timid scruples of a young heart to so hasty a marriage, she answered,—

“No, Charles, no! It is not that. I would not so ill repay your generous kindness. I would not so badly return my benefactor’s love. But I cannot—no, I cannot—I ought not—nay, I dare not, unite my fate with yours, till all doubt is removed of who and what I am. Oh, Charles! I love you deeply. You know it—you must have seen it; but yet, in truth and deep sincerity, I tell you that even if you had condescended to wed the poor, wild peasant girl, as you knew her long ago, Arrah Neil had too much love for Charles Walton to let him so degrade himself. No; as your equal by birth, however much inferior in mind and every other quality, I am yours when you will.

I will not say a word : I will not plead even for a day's delay ; but there must be no doubt—it must be all proved."

"My dearest Arrah," replied her lover, tenderly, "I have no doubt. All is clear—all is proved to me."

"But not to the world, Charles—not to the world," she answered. "You have yourself admitted it; and you must not, indeed you must not urge me, if you would not make me unhappy—unhappy, either to refuse aught that you ask, or unhappy to do that which I think wrong."

Still he would have persuaded, but she gazed at him reproachfully, saying, —"Oh, Charles, forbear!"—and he felt the heart beneath his arm beat violently.

"Well then, Arrah," he said in a somewhat mournful tone, "remember, my beloved, you have promised that whenever these papers can be found—and I trust that will be soon—or that your birth be by any other means clearly established—you will be mine without delay."

“The instant that you ask me,” replied Arrah Neil; and shortly after Charles Walton led her back to the arms of Lady Margaret Langley. He left her there, and hurried out to the houses where his men were lodged, and seeking out old Major Randal, bade him to send a small party in the direction of Bishop’s Merton, with orders to inquire for Captain Barecolt at every village on the way.

“In that part of the country,” he said, anticipating the old soldier’s objections, “I find that the parliamentary party dare not show their face, and there can be no danger of a surprise. Lord Hertford’s people keep the roundheads down.”

“Oh! I have no objection, my good lord,” answered Major Randal, drily. “I could as ill spare Barecolt as your lordship, though he has been too much absent from his troop of late; but if it be for his majesty’s service, I have nought to say. However, in time of need he always proves himself a good soldier, and in time of idleness he amuses me, which few

things do nowadays. I can hardly make him out yet, after having known him ten years or more; for I never knew any one but himself who was a braggart and a brave man—a liar and an honest one. However, I will send out a party to-night, as your lordship seems anxious.”

The old officer went forth to do as he proposed; but Lord Walton did not return at once to his dwelling, as might be supposed. On the contrary, he remained in Major Randal's quarters, buried in deep thought, so intense, so absorbing, that several persons came and went without his perceiving them. For months he had struggled against the passion in his bosom. He had struggled successfully, not to crush, but to restrain it; and, like a dammed-up torrent, it had gone on increasing in power behind the barrier that confined it, till now that the obstacle was removed, it rushed forth with overwhelming power. There was an eager, a vehement, an almost apprehensive longing to call her he

loved his own, which can only be felt by a strong spirit that has resisted its own impulses. There was a fear that it never would be—a vague impression that some unforeseen impediment, some change, some danger—nay, perhaps, death itself, would interpose, and forbid it; and when he roused himself with a start, he resolved to urge Arrah, with every argument, to cast aside all her scruples, and be his at once.

He found her seated by Lady Margaret, with the old woman's hand in hers, and the stag-hound's head upon her knee, and there had been evidently agitating but tender words passing; for Arrah's eyes were full of tears, though there was a sweet smile upon her lip. Charles Walton was too full of his errand for any concealment;—he told Lady Margaret all, and besought her to join her persuasions to his, which she did joyfully. But the fair girl resisted, gently, sweetly, yet firmly—even though he spoke of the chances of his own death. The thought brought bright drops

into her eyes again; but still she besought him not to ask her, and looked so mournfully in his face when he seemed to doubt her love, that he was once more forced to yield.

What was it that made her resolute against his wishes—ay, against the dearest feelings of her own heart? There was a dread, a fancy, that if she became Charles Walton's wife, and the proofs of her birth should never be discovered, he might regret what he had done—that he might wish the words unspoken, the bond of their union unbroken. She did not do him full justice; but the very idea was agony; and though she knew that whatever he might feel in such a case, he was too generous to let her perceive his regret, yet she saw sufficiently into her own heart to be sure that she should doubt and fear, and that no peace, no joy, would ever be hers, if, in her marriage to him, there was one cause which could produce reasonable regret.



## CHAPTER XVII.

It was a bright sunny morning, when walking forth, as if for some mere morning's excursion, the Earl of Beverley, with Lady Margaret Langley leaning on his arm, and Lord Walton with his sister, took their way to the old church in Shrewsbury. Arrah Neil, with old Major Randal, and one or two of the servants had gone a different way; for Annie Walton, though the customs of those days were different, did not wish, in the midst of civil war, confusion, and bloodshed, to chequer sadder scenes with the spectacle of a gay wedding. One by one they entered the church; and there was no gazing crowd to witness. All was quiet, and even solemn; but the bright

smile of the morning cheered the fair bride's heart, and lent to imagination an augury of happy hours. The ceremony was soon over ; and Lord Walton gave his sister to his friend, undoubtedly with joy and satisfaction ; but yet he could not refrain one bitter sigh, or forbear from turning his eyes sadly and reproachfully to Arrah Neil ; but that glance was met by so tender, so imploring a look from that fair and speaking face, that he easily read in it, that to hold her resolution cost her as much as it cost him.

Four or five days passed after sweet Annie Walton had become the wife of Lord Beverley, and still no news had been received from Bishop's Merton. The king had returned some time before to Shrewsbury ; many bodies of men had flocked to his standard ; reports favourable to his cause had been rife ; risings in his favour, on the road to London, had been rumoured ; and news had been received, that under the very walls of Worcester, Prince Rupert's fiery horse had defeated a superior

party of the enemy. Every one began to speak of a speedy advance towards the capital, and all seemed glad of the prospect except Charles Walton. At length the order for preparation was given, and all was bustle and activity. Lord Walton proposed to his aunt to remain with her he loved at Shrewsbury; but Lady Margaret answered,—

“No, Charles; I will follow you as near as I can; and if I know Arrah right, she would not stay behind. As soon as you know the direction of your march we will set out, and perhaps may be your harbingers to prepare your quarters for you. I fear not, my dear boy. These roundheads are not anthropophagi, and will not eat up women and children.”

The royal army marched on the following morning, the 12th October; but for ten days Arrah Neil only saw her lover once, at Bridgenorth, and Annie Walton only once her husband; for though the king's leave was given that he should remain for a fortnight more

with his bride at Longnar, even love could not keep him from his duty, and love and duty both taught her to follow where he went.

No news was heard of an enemy ; the march of the king's force was unopposed ; and the only inconvenience that was experienced was the frequent want of good provisions, for the false reports industriously spread by the agents of the parliament induced the people of the country to believe that the cavaliers plundered wherever they went. Day by day, however, Arrah Neil or her fair cousin received letters or messengers from the army, and this was consolation under any privation ; till at length, towards the end of October, the small party of ladies, with the servants that attended them, reached the village of South Newington, a few miles from Banbury, and obtained lodging at a large old farm-house in the neighbourhood, close on the banks of the little Sarbrook. They were indeed glad enough to find shelter, for the weather was cold and stormy ; and the good

farmer received them willingly enough, and prayed the king might prosper ; for the vicinity of a parliamentary garrison in Banbury had taught the peasantry, though somewhat late in the day, that gross tyranny can be exercised in the name of liberty, and bitter injustice practised by those who have ever law and equity on their lips. It was about three in the afternoon when they reached the farmhouse, and while hasty preparations were being made for their accommodation, which the extent of the building rendered not very difficult, Arrah Neil stood at the window, gazing out upon the fields, the sky, and the stream. Heavy leaden clouds hung over head, and shut out the blue of heaven and the beams of the sun ; a dull, gray shower was pouring down upon the earth, dimming the bright colouring of the autumnal foliage ; the stream ran turbid, with a sad and solemn murmur, and the hoarse wind howled as it passed the casement. Her thoughts were as gloomy as the scene, and something like the

dark shadow which used formerly to come over her seemed to rest upon her spirit. The old stag-hound stalked up, and put his muzzle in her hand, but she noticed him not; the servants came and went, but she saw them not; Lady Margaret spoke, but her ears did not catch the sounds. At length Lady Beverley pronounced her name; and Arrah Neil started, for the tones were like those of Lord Walton; and she was turning round to reply, when her eye caught sight of two cavaliers riding into the court. A look of joy instantly spread over her face, and she exclaimed,—

“ Oh, Annie ! dear Annie ! there is Captain Barecolt, and Charles will be happy now ! ”

As soon as he could spring from his horse, and find his way up the stairs, Captain Barecolt was in the room. He was very pale and very thin, and Annie Walton thought for a moment that he must be the bearer of evil tidings, but his well satisfied smile soon set her fears at rest.

“What news—what news, sir?” exclaimed Lady Margaret, who had shared the apprehensions of her niece.

“None but good ones, madam,” replied the captain. “Lord Walton has honoured me by making me his messenger from Edgectot, where he is now with his majesty. No enemy is near; Banbury is about to be besieged, and consequently cavalry is out of fashion. So we shall have three or four days’ repose; for they will doubtless hold out that time for their honour, and, to say truth, I shall not be sorry even myself for a little rest, having been let blood pretty sharply since I stood last in this fair presence. I can bear bleeding, methinks, as well as most men, being somewhat accustomed to the process; but this Master Dry, of Longsoaken, was an unskilful leech, and took so much, that there was very little left, and I was obliged to lie in bed at Chippenham for ten days.”

“But you are wet, Captain Barecolt, and

fatigued," said Lady Beverley; "will you take some refreshment?"

"Not before I have done my errand, bright lady," replied the officer; "which is simply to tell you that my Lord Walton and your noble lord will be over here with all speed, and to give this packet to another fair lady, in whose cause I have laboured and suffered successfully;" and approaching Arrah Neil, who had been listening with eager attention to every word that fell from his lips, he kissed her hand, and gave her her lover's letter.

She took and read it eagerly, while her heart beat fast, and her brain almost turned giddy with joy.

"My own beloved," it ran, "Barecolt joined me last night—delayed by accidents which he will tell you. He brings with him all the papers which were plundered from the cottage of poor old Neil; and they, beyond all question, together with the others we possess, establish your birth and your rights. I enclose



them for your comfort. Show them to Lady Margaret ; and, dearest Arrah, remember the promise that you made to me. We halt here for three days, I will be with you in an hour, not to part with you again till you are the bride of him who loves you more than life.

“CHARLES WALTON.”

Arrah paused for a moment or two, and leaned upon the table. Her hand that held the letter shook, and her cheek glowed ; but there was light in her beautiful eyes, and a smile upon her sweet lip. Then calmly gliding forward to Lady Margaret, she gave her the papers which her lover's letter had contained, saying, “Now, indeed, I am beyond all doubt your child.”

Then turning to her cousin, she placed Charles Walton's letter in her hand, gazing on her face while she read it, with a look calm, but full of many thoughts and feelings. Lady Beverley, when she had done, cast her arm round her, whispering, “My

dear Arrah, now I think he has a right to expect——”

“Everything that love and gratitude can prompt,” replied her fair companion. “I would not thwart him even in a thought, Annie. To you, sir,” she continued, speaking aloud, and addressing Captain Barecolt, “I owe an infinite debt, which I must trust to those who can acquit it better to acknowledge fully and discharge. But indeed, Annie, he needs tendence and refreshment.—See, Lady Margaret is moved ; will you order him what is needful ?”

“By your permission, fair ladies, I will even take care of myself,” answered the redoubtable captain ; “it is a trade I am accustomed to, I can assure you ; and wherever bread and bacon, ale and wine, are to be found, I am quite equal to find them out.”

“Pray do, sir, pray do,” said Lady Beverley, and Captain Barecolt left them to themselves.

The moments that intervened before the

arrival of those who were expected, were full of agitation. The papers which Barecolt had recovered from the house of Dry, of Longsoaken, were carefully examined, and the full proofs of Arrah's birth were found beyond all doubt. Amongst the rest were several letters of Lady Margaret and her daughter, and a letter from the husband of the latter to his unhappy wife on the day preceding his execution. Besides these were several documents, showing that the small sum which had been annually paid to Sergeant Neil, proceeded from a cousin of the poor girl's father, who had embraced the ecclesiastical profession, and was the abbot of a monastery on the continent. He, O'Donnell, and old Neil himself, were the only persons entrusted with the secret of Arrah's birth ; but it appeared from one of the letters of a late date, that the Abbé Tyrone was still living, so that if any further testimony had been required, he could have furnished it. Beneath these papers was a parchment freshly written, signed and sealed by the

king, and countersigned by the proper officers, reversing the attainder of poor Arrah's father, and declaring the confiscated estates restored. A momentary gleam of light beamed forth upon her dark fate—How soon to be eclipsed again!

Some half hour was thus consumed, but then the thoughts of all turned happily to the expected arrival of those they loved. Ere an hour after Captain Barecolt's arrival had passed, Arrah Neil placed herself once more at the window to watch for their coming. She had not gazed long through the decreasing light, when her ear caught the sound of horses' feet, and in a moment after Charles Walton and the earl, followed by a few servants, rode up at a quick pace. They were accompanied, however, by another gentleman in a black cassock and a cloak to keep him from the rain, and the poor girl's heart fluttered wildly at the sight. But still giving way to the impulse, she only paused to exclaim,—“Here they are, dear Annie,” and running

down to the door, was soon in Charles Walton's arms.

"Dear one! dear one!" said the young nobleman as he pressed her to his heart, reading her deep love in her eyes; "I have come to put you to a trial, my Arrah, and see whether you will keep your promise frankly."

"To the letter, and with pleasure, Charles," replied Arrah Neil, in a low murmur that reached no ear but his.

"To-night?" asked Lord Walton. "The king's chaplain must return. All forms are already cleared away."

"This very hour, if you desire it," answered she whom he loved; "your lightest wish is my law, henceforth till death."

Charles Walton could not reply, but taking her hand he led her to the chaplain, and then conducted him under her guidance to the room above.

We need not pause upon explanations. All was soon arranged and determined. After a brief and sober meal, and with none but one

or two of the servants and Captain Barecolt present, the party formed a circle round, and the chaplain opened the book. In the silence that succeeded, the howling of the wind and the pattering of the rain were heard, and Arrah Neil turned an anxious glance towards the casement, for though her bosom was full of deep and strong emotions, there was something in the sound that seemed to connect itself with them. Charles Walton saw but her, thought of her alone; and after a brief pause the chaplain went on. Word by word he read the whole service through; the vow was plighted, the ring was on the finger; and, with joy he had feared that he might never know, Charles Walton held Arrah Neil as his wife to his bosom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Silence had spread over the world for some hours. It was between two and three in the morning, and as dark as the grave, when first a horse's foot was heard coming at full speed, and then came loud knocking at the door.

All those who slept roused themselves, and in a few minutes there were steps upon the stairs. The voice of Captain Barecolt was then heard speaking to the earl of Beverley.

"The king has sent, my lord," he said, "to order us to draw to a rendezvous on the top of Edgehill, near Kinton. Lord Essex is in power in the valley below, and it is resolved to give him battle. We will cut him to mince-meat."

"Tell Lord Walton," said the voice of the earl; "knock at the opposite door;" but ere Captain Barecolt could follow these directions, the young lord came out partly dressed.

"See that the horses be fed instantly, Barecolt," said Charles Walton, "and have them saddled. I will join you in a few minutes," and he retired. His bride rose and cast her arms around him in silence.

"Nay, Arrah, dear Arrah, I must go where my king commands," he said, struggling against the feelings of his own heart.

"I know it, Charles," she answered in a far

calmer tone than he had expected ; “ I would not keep you for aught on earth. But let me go with you, my dear husband ; I shall have no fear ; I will stay upon some hill as I did once before, and witness my hero fighting for his king.”

“ Impossible, impossible, dear girl !” he replied ; “ this is a very different affair. To-night I trust, in God’s mercy, to return and tell you that we have won the victory and regained our monarch’s throne. It must be so indeed, my beloved—you know not what you ask.”

Arrah paused in sad and silent thought for a moment, and then said, “ Well, let me be with you to the last before you go ;” and dressing herself hastily she followed him down. Lady Beverley was soon by her side ; few words were spoken ; all was quick preparation ; and ere four o’clock, with pale and anxious faces, those two fair girls took one more embrace, and saw their husbands ride away into the darkness. It had ceased rain-



ing, but it was bitter cold, and the wind blew sharply in: yet they gazed forth as long as even fancy could show the receding forms, and then, linked arm in arm, they retired to Lady Beverley's room to pray, each asking her own heart the question she did not dare utter aloud, "Who will return? who rest upon the field?" There was a faint streak of gray in the sky when they parted, and Annie counselled her fair cousin to lie down and strive for sleep.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE morning of Sunday, the 21st of October, broke dull and cold; the grey clouds swept hurriedly over the sky, like charging squadrons, and the wind whistled through the branches of a solitary clump of old beeches, which marked the highest point of the sharp rise called Edge-hill. From the brow might be seen a wide open slope, extending down nearly to the little town of Keinton, or Kington, with some flat meadows at the bottom, having a number of hedges and enclosures on the left as one looked from the hill. On the other side all was at that time open, and the fair undulations of Warwickshire might be seen beyond, with the brown woods clothed

in a light mist. It was a peaceful and pleasant scene in the gray morning, notwithstanding the coldness and dulness of the day ; and very soon after dawn the pale blue smoke began to rise from the early chimneys of the little town, rising slow, till it was caught by the wind from the hill, and then hurrying away with a few light rolls, and losing itself in air.

Shortly after, a drum was heard to beat below, and then came the blast of the trumpet, and soon troops might be descried forming slowly and quietly in the plain, as if about to commence a safe and easy march. Horse and foot took their places in long line, and here and there officers and camp-followers were seen walking carelessly about, while at other spots some more rigid disciplinarians might be observed putting their men into better order, and galloping hither and thither in all the bustle of command.

Suddenly, however, some confusion was observed in one part of the plain, where a

group of gentlemen on horseback had been visible for some time, and two persons detached themselves from the rest, and rode up at full speed towards the brow of the hill, towards which all eyes were now turned. What saw they there which caused such apparent surprise? It was a small party of horse, not more than twenty in number, which had just moved up from the other side, and now halted, gazing into the valley. There were scarfs, and plumes, and glittering arms amongst them, betokening no peaceful occupation; and, after a moment's pause, a trumpeter, mounted on a gray horse, put his instrument to his lips, and blew a long, loud blast. The next moment fresh heads appeared above the hedge, and troop after troop rode forward, and in fair array took up a position at the summit.

All was changed on the plain below in a moment; activity and temporary confusion succeeded the quiet regularity which had been before observable. The two horsemen who

had been detached from the group in front were hurriedly recalled; musketeers were seen fling off to the left; the cavalry was collecting on the wings; the foot began to form line in the centre; and the party which had remained a little in advance, were discovered moving slowly along quite across the valley, while from time to time a horseman dashed away from it, and seemed to convey orders to this or that regiment in different parts of the field.

Essex was now first aware of the presence of an enemy, and easily divined that he could march no further without fighting; but it is more with those above that we have to do. Soon after the small body of cavaliers on the hill had been discovered by the roundhead army, up came at headlong speed, followed by some eight or ten gentlemen, who could hardly keep pace with him, a fiery-looking youth, with his beaver up, and his eye lightening with eager impetuosity. He seemed barely one and twenty years of age;

but there was on his brow the look of habitual command ; and in the quick roll of his eye over the parliamentary army, the sudden pause it made here and there, and then its rapid turn towards another point, one might see how closely he scanned the forces of the enemy—how keenly he observed all that seemed worthy of attention.

“They see us, your highness,” said one of the gentlemen who had arrived before him. “They were actually commencing their march when we appeared.”

“They would not have marched far, my lord,” replied Prince Rupert ; “but ’tis as well as it is. There are more of them than I thought ; but we must make valour supply numbers. I had heard that they had left two regiments behind at Stratford.”

“There are, sir, two of infantry and one of cavalry,” replied Lord Walton ; “but that seems to me the best of all reasons for giving battle as soon as possible.”

“The very best,” answered the prince, with

a smile. "Victory is more needful to us than food, and of that we have had no great plenty. But, by my life, there is not a regiment of foot within sight. The foot are sad encumbrances. Would that these times were like the days of old, when every gentleman fought on horseback. We are fallen upon vulgar days."

"I see the head of a regiment amongst those distant hedges," said the Earl of Beverley; "but our quarters were very much scattered last night."

"And some noble persons had fair young wives to visit, my good lord," replied the prince, bowing his head, with a smile.

"True," rejoined the earl; "but yet your highness sees they are not the last in the field; as how should they be, when they have such treasures to defend—such eyes for witnesses."

The reply suited the prince well; and after some more gay conversation, he dismounted from his horse, and seated himself under one of the beech trees, watching attentively every movement of the enemy, and from time to

time pointing out to those around him the measures taken by Lord Essex for defence.

“See!” he said; “he is filling those hedges with musketeers. Aston and his dragoons must clear them. I will not break my teeth upon such stones. He is forming a powerful reserve there, I suppose, under Ramsay or the Earl of Bedford, and he has got all his foot in the centre. Who is that on their left, I wonder? Well, I shall soon know; for I trust it will not be long before I see him closer. Would to heaven these tardy foot would come! We are giving him full time for every arrangement he could desire, and you may be sure he will not stir from amongst those hedges till we dislodge him.”

But the impatient prince had long to wait; for ten o'clock was near at hand ere the first regiment of royal artillery was on the ground. From that time, indeed, every quarter of an hour, brought up some fresh body; but even then the men had marched far, and needed some refreshment. All that could be given



them was a brief space of repose and some cold water, for provisions were not to be obtained. The soldiery, however, were full of ardour, and many a gay jest and gibe passed amongst those who were never destined to quit that plain.

Amongst other events that have been noticed by historians, is the fact that the king's guard, composed entirely of gentlemen volunteers, having heard as they followed the monarch some light scoffs at their peculiar post near his person, besought him to dispense with their close attendance that day, and obtained permission to charge with the cavalry of Prince Rupert on the right. On the left a smaller body of horse, commanded by Commissary-General Wilmot, and a regiment of dragoons, under Sir Arthur Aston, had the task of assailing the right of the parliamentary army, protected as it was by enclosures lined with musketeers; and to this service the small corps of the Earl of Beverley was also assigned. Lord Walton fought upon the right

under the prince; and but one regiment of cavalry, led by Sir John Byron, was kept back as a reserve.

One o'clock had passed, when, at length, after a short consultation with the Earl of Lindsay, the king commanded his forces to march slowly down the hill towards Kinton. The distance was considerable; and before the ground was reached on which it was thought advisable to begin the battle, the day had so far advanced that some old and experienced officers suggested a delay till the following morning. But sufficient arguments were not wanting to show that Essex must gain, and his sovereign lose by such a course. The troops, too, were eager to engage; and a very general belief prevailed that few of the parliamentary regiments would really be brought to fight against their king. In the confusion of all accounts, it is hardly to be discovered how the battle really commenced; but certain it is that Prince Rupert burst into fury at the very thought of delay, and that

his force of cavalry first commenced the fight, by charging the left of the enemy. As he was waiting to give the word, with all his blood on fire at the thought of the approaching strife, he remarked Lord Walton twice turn round and gaze towards the hill in the rear, and he asked, in a sharp tone, "What look you for, my lord? Soldiers ever should look forward."

Charles Walton's brow became as dark as night, and it cost him a moment's thought ere he could reply with calmness,—

"I looked, sir, for one I thought I saw upon the hill as we moved down; and as to the rest, Rupert of Bavaria has never been more forward on the field, nor ever will be, than Charles Walton. But there is other matter to attend to now. See you that regiment of horse advancing to the charge?"

The prince looked round, and beheld a considerable body of the enemy, coming on at a quick pace, pistol in hand. He raised his sword above his head, about to speak the

word ; but, at that moment, the opposite party discharged their shot into the ground, and galloping on wheeled their horses into line with the cavaliers. A buzz ran through the ranks of "Fortescue, Fortescue"—"He was forced to join the roundheads"—"Many more are in the like case," and at the same moment the cry of "Charge !" was heard ; and, hurled like a thunderbolt against the mass of the enemy's cavalry on the left, with the prince at their head, the gallant force of cavaliers rushed on. A fire, innocuous from the terror and confusion with which it was directed, was opened upon their advancing line ; but ere swords crossed, the parliamentary cavalry of the left wing, with the exception of one small body, turned the rein and fled. The cavaliers thundered on the flank and rear ; men and horses rolled over together, and foremost in the fight, wherever a show of resistance was made, was the bridegroom of a day.

"Lightning and devils !" cried Captain

Barecolt, who followed hard upon his steps. "See what love will make a man do. He has distanced the prince by six horse-lengths, and he will have that standard in a minute. Come, my lord, let a man have his share."

On, on they rushed, pursuers and pursued, along the plain, over the hill; down went steel jack, and buff coat, and iron morion. Some turned at the last to strike one stroke for life, but still the fiery spur of Rupert and of Walton were behind them, and Edgehill field was far away, when the prince himself cried,—

"Halt! Sound to the standard! Stay, Walton, stay! you have outstripped me indeed."

Lord Walton drew his rein; but he raised not his visor,\* for he felt that he was pale.

"Methinks we are too far from the field,

\* We do not always remember that in the reign of Charles I. the cavalry were in general defended by casques with moveable visors. The dragoons, indeed, had usually an open helmet.

your highness," he replied. "I will ride back with speed, for my men have followed close behind me, while you rally the rest and bring them up. I fear some mischance, for the king is without guards."

"Go, go!" said the prince, instantly perceiving the error that had been committed; "I will come after with all speed. Sound trumpet! Sound to the standard!"

"Call them back, Barecolt, and follow," exclaimed Lord Walton. "Old Randal is as mad as any of us. Bring him back quick. I fear we have spoiled the best day's deeds England has seen for long;" and gathering together what men he could, he spurred headlong back towards the field. Captain Barecolt followed on his steps, and he thought he saw the young lord waver somewhat in the saddle; a stream of blood, too, was trickling down his scarf from his right shoulder, and spurring on his horse to Charles Walton's side, he said, "You are wounded, sir; you are badly wounded! Let me lead you to ——"

But at that moment the field of battle came again before their eyes, and Lord Walton exclaimed,—

“Is this a time to talk of wounds?—Look there!”

The aspect of the scene had indeed greatly changed from what it had been some half an hour before, when Wilmot and Aston on the left, and Rupert on the right, were driving the roundhead cavalry before them. Firm in his position stood the Earl of Essex with his foot. His reserve of horse had come down, and were charging the royal infantry. The right wing, the left, and the reserve of Charles's horse were far away pursuing the flying foe; and the monarch himself, with his two sons, only guarded by a small force of mounted cavaliers, who had been too wise and loyal to follow the rash example set them by the prince, appeared nearly surrounded by the parliamentary cavalry under Sir William Balfour.

As Lord Walton reappeared upon the field,

the royal standard wavered and fell, and in the midst of the fierce fire that rolled along the front of the enemy's line, he charged upon the flank of Balfour's horse to rescue his sovereign from the peril he was in. As they galloped up, however, the standard rose again, and Essex's reserve began slowly to retire upon the infantry; but still the young nobleman urged on his little troop upon the retreating force; some fifty gentlemen detached themselves from the small body that surrounded the monarch, and charging in front, and cutting their way clear through, Charles Walton and Francis of Beverley met in the midst of the *melee*.

"How goes it, Charles?" said the earl, with a glad voice. "If the prince would but return, we would have a glorious victory!"

"He is coming quick," replied Lord Walton. "Rally your force with mine, Beverley, for one more charge;" and in another minute they were again in the midst of the retreating rebels.



At the same moment, in sad confusion and disarray, came back Prince Rupert's cavaliers ; but discipline and order were lost amongst them. Officers were without men, and men without officers. Some few joined the troops of Lord Beverley and Lord Walton.

But night was falling. Sir William Balfour led his horse in between the regiments of infantry steadily and skilfully, then turned to face the enemy ; and the earl, finding that nothing could be effected without a larger force, retreated and galloped up to Prince Rupert, who now stood near the king, to urge one decisive charge upon the centre of the parliamentary line. The prince received him coldly, however ; perhaps from a consciousness that he himself had done amiss, and some one suggested that the king should leave the field, pointing out how firmly Lord Essex kept his ground.

“For shame ! for shame !” cried the earl. “The victory might still be ours ; but certainly it is not his ; and as long as his majesty

remains, it cannot be so. The greater part of our foot is unbroken ; our horse is victorious, and whoever quits the field, I will remain upon it, dead or alive."

"And I too, most certainly, my lord," said Charles. "I will never do so unkingly an act as to forsake them who have forsaken all to serve me. There is no look of victory on my lord of Essex's side. We keep the field. Let them advance to attack us if they dare. Take measures to withdraw those cannon from that little mound ; restore what order may be, for night is falling fast ; and set a sure guard, that we be not surprised."

For some time the discharge of musketry, which was still going on, continued upon both sides ; but gradually, as the darkness increased, it slackened, revived, slackened again, fell into dropping shots, and then fires began to appear along the line of either army, while all the confusion and disarray which ever succeeds a drawn battle, where the combatants are only parted by the night, took

place on either part. Hours were spent in giving some sort of order to the royalist forces; officers sought their men, soldiers looked for their officers, rumours of every kind were spread, and many accidents and misadventures happened, which cannot here be told.

But there was one sad subject of thought that occupied many a mind. "Who had fallen?—Who remained wounded on the field?" It was impossible to discover; for the confusion was so great, that no one knew where the other was to be found. Lord Beverley, however, had seen Charles Walton almost to the latest moment of the strife, and in sending off a messenger to Newington, to inform his fair bride of his own safety, he ventured to add that her brother also had escaped the slaughter of that day. About midnight, however, as he was lying by a fire, he heard a step approach, and looking up he saw Barecolt beside him.

The soldier's eyes gazed round the group,

which lay in the glare, and before the earl could speak, he said,—

“So he is not here!”

“Do you mean Lord Walton?” asked the earl.

“Ay, to be sure, my lord!” replied Barecolt; “I have been seeking you these two hours; and now we had better go and seek him; for, depend upon it, he is on the field. He was badly wounded with a shot in the side, in that first charge, and he got another in the last; but perhaps he is not dead yet. The night is cold, and that staunches blood.”

“We have no lights,” said the earl, with a cold foreboding coming over his heart. “Stay, the moon will be up in half an hour. Where saw you him last?”

“Within half musket-shot of the second regiment on their right,” answered Barecolt, “we had better wait, too, till the moon rises. She will give some light, if she does not even chase the clouds—and yet I would fain go soon, for I have strange doubts.”

“Of what?” asked the earl.

“Nay, I do not know well,” replied the soldier; “but I know one thing, that sweet lady of his was not so far from the field as he wished, and others thought. Just as we were moving down, I saw her, or her ghost, and a countryman, with his hand upon her horse’s bridle, as if leading him over the rough ground on the left. Her lord saw her, too, or I am mistaken, for he turned to look more than once; and there were words between him and the prince about it.”

The earl put his hand to his brow in that sort of painful dread, which, without taking any definite form, hangs like a dark cloud over the whole range of destiny.

“You saw her near the field!” he said, “you saw her here! When was this?”

“Why, I told you, my good lord; just as we were moving down, about one of the clock,” answered Captain Barecolt; “but there is a little cottage, where a shepherd lives, up along the edge of the hill. Perhaps she has taken

refuge there; or, it may be, she has gone back."

"God grant it!" said the earl; "I will send up to the cottage to see if she be there."

Barecolt, however, undertook the task himself, saying, that in such a piercing night the walk would warm him. But he found the cottage deserted, and though there was sufficient light to guide him back to the spot where the Earl of Beverley lay, the moon did not show herself all night, the darkness remained as profound as ever, neither lantern nor torch could be procured, and it was perfectly hopeless to attempt a search under such circumstances. Weary hour by hour passed away beside the fire, till it died away for want of fuel; but still, notwithstanding all the fatigue that they had endured, Lord Beverley and his companion sat wakeful till the dawn of morning, and during their conversation Barecolt showed a depth of feeling and interest in the fate of Charles Walton and Arrah Neil, which raised him much in the opinion of the earl.

As soon as the first gray streaks announced the coming day, Lord Beverley was on horseback with his troop ; but there before him stood the parliamentary army, reinforced, rather than diminished, since the night before. It was impossible to approach the part of the field where Lord Walton had last been seen, except with a large force ; but four pieces of the enemy's artillery were seen, considerably in advance of their line, in that direction, and at the suggestion of Barecolt, the earl asked and obtained leave to make a charge with his own troop and that of Major Randal, to endeavour to capture some of the cannon. This, as is well known, was effected early in the morning, without much loss or opposition ; but the chief object of the earl, the discovering of his friend's body, could not be accomplished.

The rest of the events of that day are familiar to every one. The greater part of the morning was spent in consultations on the royalist part, and in fruitless endeavours to

induce the officers to make one more great effort against the enemy—till, towards evening, both armies began to retire; the first movement of retreat being made by the parliamentary forces, which were followed for a considerable distance by the royalist cavalry.

For ten miles the Earl of Beverley joined in the pursuit, but then obtained leave to return to the field, and his sad search began.

It was long protracted, and night was again beginning to fall, when a low fierce growl, as he walked along one of the hedges on the right, called his attention to a pit which had been dug at the foot of a small oak tree. A little path ran down amongst some bushes, and hurrying along it, with Barecolt and several of his men, he reached the bottom.

There they found two or three wounded soldiers, who had dragged themselves thither to die; but in the midst was the saddest sight of all. Prone upon the ground, with the head uncovered, lay the body of Charles Walton; but that head was pillowed on the arm



of poor Arrah Neil. Her lips seemed to have been pressed upon his, for her fair face had fallen forward upon his neck, and her bosom rested on his steel cuirass, while her left arm hung over him, with the hand half clasping his right. Beside them, gazing down upon the poor girl, with drooping ears and tail, stood the gaunt stag-hound, and the faithful beast turned fiercely upon the first man who approached. He recognised the earl, however, and took a step or two forward towards him with a faint howl, and then returned and gazed again on her with whom he had sported in her childhood.

Lord Beverley knelt down and gently took her hand; it was cold as ice; but there was a keen frost, and he touched her cheek, removing the rich ringlets of her hair, which had fallen over her face. There was some warmth left; and raising her in his arms, he directed her to be carried into the little town of Kington, now in possession of the royalist cavalry, with the body of her husband.

But Arrah never spoke again. It was evident that she had come in time to receive the last breath of him she loved, for the fingers of Lord Walton's left hand were found tightly closed upon her garments; but how she had found him, or when, could not be discovered. All that was ever learned was, that one of the ploughmen of the farm at Newington had guided her to Edgehill, and that from the summit she had witnessed the battle below. But at night, as she would not return, the man had left her; and all the rest was darkness. Every effort was made to recall her to herself, but all was in vain; and in about two hours after she had been removed to Kineton, the last feeble spark of life that was left went out; and she was buried in the same grave with her husband, in less than a week from her marriage day.

Such was the fate of one of the fairest and the gentlest of human beings. It would be a sad fact, that virtue and good conduct, that the highest qualities of the mind and of the

heart cannot always command success or insure happiness, but that we have the grand assurance, both in God's word and in God's goodness, that there is a place where there is compensation and reward. That the very brightest and the very best of human efforts often do not obtain their recompense here, has been admitted by one the most sceptical of philosophers as a strong evidence of a future state. Our hopes and expectations are founded on a higher and better basis, and we are permitted to see, even in the sorrows of the good, the trial of that faith which is the assurance of immortality.

We might well close our history here, and close it in sadness; but as there are almost always some mitigating circumstance in the course of disastrous events, we may be allowed to take off a little from the tragic character of the conclusion of this tale by speaking of the after history of other persons who have figured in the scene; and the reader is always anxious more or less, to hear the ulti-

mate fate of those in whom he has taken an interest.

To speak of the more important personages, then, in the first place, it may well be supposed that the Earl of Beverley mourned sincerely for his friend, and his grief was somewhat aggravated by the powers of imagination; for the fact that his persuasions had been the immediate cause of Lord Walton joining the royal standard, connected itself closely with the dream which he had had in prison, and brought a shadow over him whenever the events of the day gave him time for thought. He himself went safely through all the scenes of the civil war; remaining uninjured, except from a slight wound which he received at Long Marston Moor. His fair lady followed him as closely as was possible throughout the whole of those eventful times, and she was as happy as unchanging love and affection could make her amidst the disasters of her country, and the overthrow of the royal house to which she was attached. The fall of her brother;

and the death of his gentle bride, affected Annie Walton deeply, and it was long ere she regained the original cheerfulness of her character. But that cheerfulness depended as much upon principle as upon mood, and instead of encouraging grief she made every effort to regain her serenity.

After the total ruin of the cavalier party, the earl and his wife retired to France, and continued to live there in almost total seclusion till the restoration of the house of Stuart brought them back to their native land, where, though they met with the neglect which in those days, and in all is too frequently the reward of good services, they bore it with perfect indifference, happy in mutual affection, and requiring nothing else to complete their felicity.

A short time before they quitted England, Lady Margaret Langley had left the troublous scene in which they were still moving, for the repose of that quiet mansion which she had long looked to only as a place of rest; but

there is still one personage of whose after history we must say a few words. Captain Deciduous Barecolt continued to serve the king as long as any services could be available, and in no point or particular did he derogate from his high established character. He fought as well, he drank as deep, he lied as vigorously as we have seen him do in the past narrative, and though in the succeeding wars he got into a thousand scrapes, in which it required all the genius of a Barecolt to extricate his neck from the halter, or his throat from the knife, he contrived, with marvellous ingenuity, to find his way out of circumstances which would have overwhelmed any common man. Nor was he absent from Worcester field, but, on the contrary, some have asserted that he was taken prisoner on that occasion, and contrived to deceive the keenness of Cromwell himself. Certain it is, that after the Restoration of Charles II., Barecolt returned to England, presented himself at Bishop's Merton, put in a claim to the property of Mr.

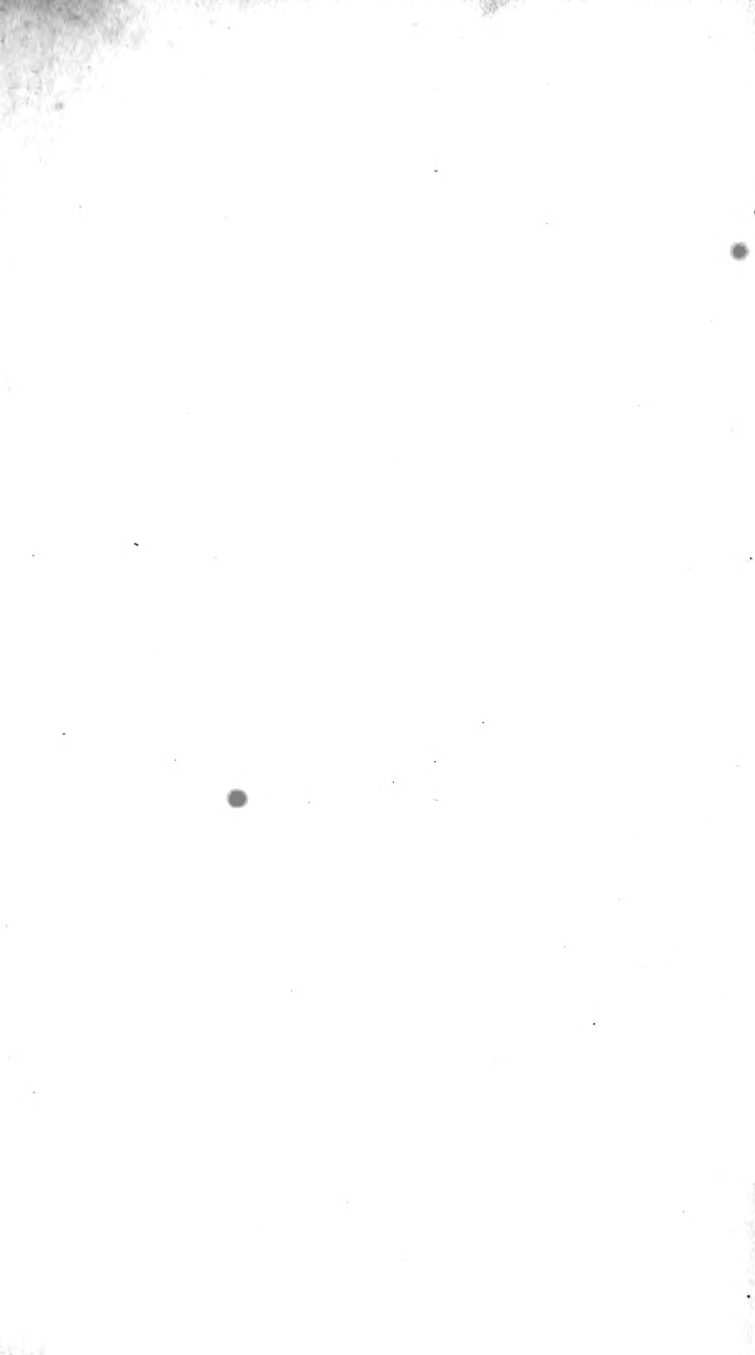
Dry, of Longsoaken, as the direct heir of old Nicholas Cobalter, and having proved that the will under which Mrs. Cobalter had possessed his uncle's property was a forgery, established such a debt against the estate of Mr. Dry, as speedily rendered him the master of Longsoaken. There he continued to reside with an elderly man named Falgate, who played the character, partly of dependant, partly of attached friend, till he had well nigh reached the age of eighty years, when, with a form somewhat bowed, and a face somewhat white, and a nose which had gradually turned from red to blue, Colonel Barecolt, of Longsoaken, sunk quietly into the grave, his last words being, "The pottle pot's empty, Diggory."

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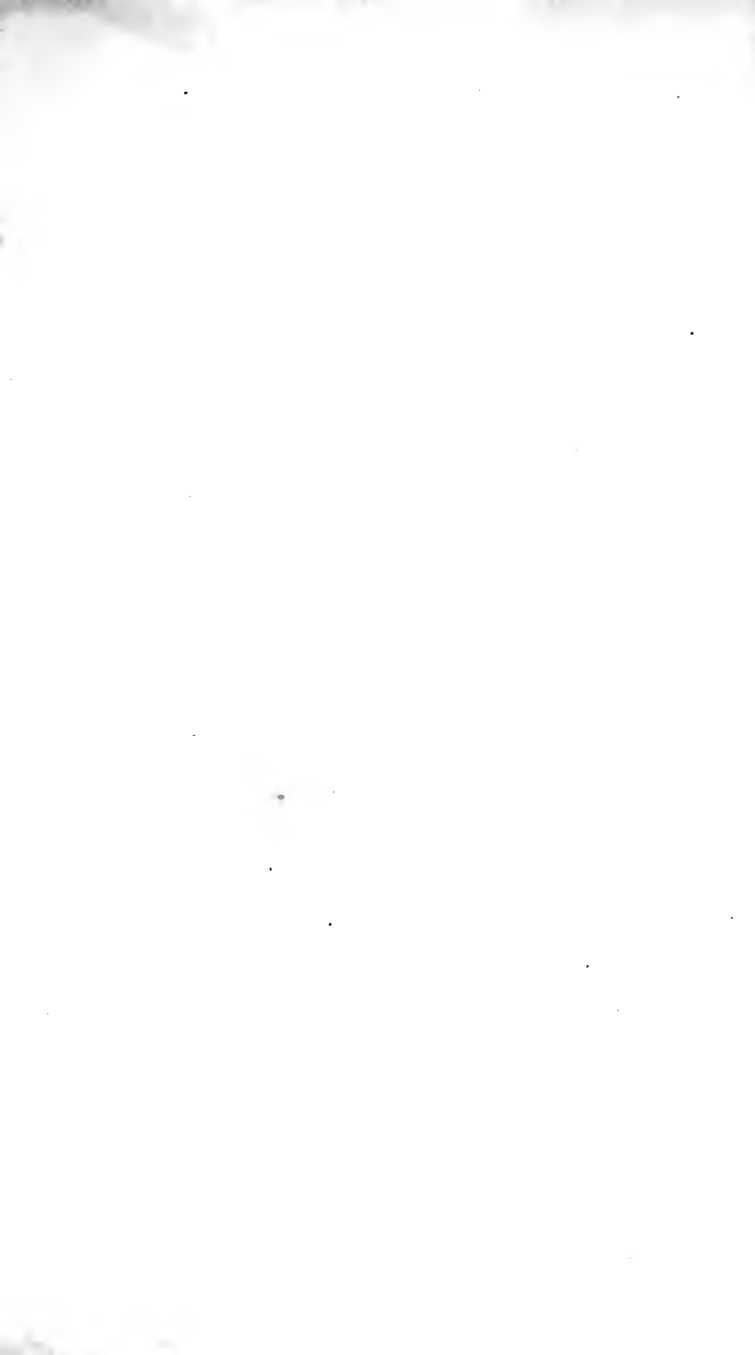












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